



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**SECOND SESSION
TUESDAY 15 MAY 2012**

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Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, GOSK, FRCS	Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	Minister of Education and Human Resources
Hon. Satya Veyash Faugoo	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development
Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology
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Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment
Hon. Yatindra Nath Varma	Attorney General
Hon. John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	Minister of Tourism and Leisure
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Hon. Sayyad Abd-Al-Cader Sayed-Hossen	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
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Hon. Janghahadoorsing Iswurdeo Mola Roopchand Seetaram	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
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Hon. Sutyadeo Moutia	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Maneswar, Hon. Peetumber
<i>Deputy Chairperson of Committees</i>	Deerpalsing, Ms K. R
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No.3 of 2012

Sitting of 15 May 2012

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

At 11.30 a.m

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table –

A. Prime Minister's Office –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the following Bills –

- (a) The Maritime Zones (Amendment) Bill (No. V of 2012);
- (b) The Chagossian Welfare Fund (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2012);
- (c) The Legal Aid (Amendment) Bill (No. VII of 2012); and
- (d) The Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill (No. VIII of 2012).

B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

- (a) The 2011 Housing and Population Census Volume I : Housing and Living Conditions.
- (b) The Digest of Agricultural Statistics 2010.

C. Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology –

The Annual Report 2009-2010 of the Mauritius College of the Air.

D. Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands –

- (a) The Quatre Bornes (Collection and Disposal of Refuse) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 63 of 2012).
- (b) The Quatre Bornes (Cleansing, management and protection of drains, gutters, canals and streams) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 64 of 2012).
- (c) The Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes (Crematorium) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 65 of 2012).
- (d) The Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes – Trois Mamelles (Cemetery/ Crematorium) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 66 of 2012).

E. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life –

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Morris Legacy Fund for the year ended 31 December 2011 (In Original).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
ROCHES NOIRES – BUNGALOW - LARCENY

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to larceny, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if a case thereof has been reported to have been committed in a bungalow at Roches Noires, on Sunday 03 July 2011 at 01.30 hours, and if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto, indicating the -

- (a) names of those arrested in connection therewith, indicating if late Anand Kumar Ramdhony who passed away whilst in police custody on 30 July 2011, at the Rivière du Rempart Police Station, was one of them, and
- (b) name of the owner of the said bungalow, indicating if the latter was informed thereof and, if so, the actions taken by him, if any, in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that at 09 20 hours on 03 July 2011, one Mr D. G. reported to Rivière du Rempart Police Station that at around 01 30 hours on the same day he was sleeping in a bungalow situated at Coastal Road, Roches Noires when an unknown person whom he can identify entered his room, threatened him with a knife, stole the sum of Rs20,000 and bolted away through a window.

In the course of the enquiry, Police questioned eleven persons, but they were allowed to go as no reasonable suspicion was raised against them after the questioning. I am informed, however, that Police enquiry into the larceny is still ongoing.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Mr Anand Kumar Ramdhony was not one of the persons questioned in connection with the larceny in the bungalow. Mr Ramdhony, as I have indicated in reply to several questions in the House, was arrested following a case of larceny of a wristwatch reported lost at Plaine des Papayes Police Station by one Mrs M. F. B residing at NHDC, Bois Mangués.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I confirm that the bungalow where the larceny was reported to the Police to have been committed belongs to me.

As I have stated publicly, as soon as I was informed of the larceny, I went on the spot to take stock of the situation and I advised Mr D. G. who was staying there to report the case to the Police.

I wish to add that, as I was not present at the time of the alleged larceny, I cannot say more about the incident. In case any person including any hon. Member or former hon. Member considers that he has relevant and material information that can assist the Police in its ongoing enquiry or assist the Court in the course of the judicial enquiry into the death of Mr Ramdhony (which I believe is scheduled for 13 July 2012 before the District Court of Mapou), I would advise them, as law-abiding and responsible citizens, to give the information to the Police or to the enquiring Magistrate. This may assist the Police and the public at large in knowing the truth and putting an end to wild allegations or pernicious speculations or to disinformation.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been informed that 11 persons were arrested in the hours following the alleged larceny and were set free. Can I know on what basis the Police arrested these persons, where they were detained and for how long?

The Prime Minister: I understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Police had shown photographs from an album, and some have asked why - this is why I asked them the question. For how long they were detained? I do not know. But they have provided alibi and they were proven to be correct and, therefore, there was no reasonable suspicion that they were involved in the larceny.

Mr Bérenger: The rumour has it Mr Speaker, Sir, that pictures of these 11 detained persons were taken, but that they were not subject to a *parade d'identification*. Has the hon. Prime Minister inquired why this procedure was followed and to what purpose were those pictures taken and to whom shown?

The Prime Minister: I see the hon. Leader of the Opposition is basing himself on rumours, but my understanding - because he mentioned it I think in a public meeting - is that it is the practice for the Police to show photographs from an album, especially habitual criminals, to see whether they can be identified, and if they are not the persons, then they are allowed to go, because there was no reasonable suspicion to believe that they were involved in the larceny.

Mr Bérenger: My question was to whom were those pictures taken and following the reply, is the hon. Prime Minister saying that all 11 of them were habitual criminals?

The Prime Minister: I am not saying that. We know the Police has a practice of showing pictures. I have asked the question because the point was made that it is the practice for the Police to show pictures; if they get more information they show additional pictures, but none of the people questioned were found to be involved in the larceny. There were alibis which were checked and which were found out to be exactly that.

Mr Bérenger: I take it from the reply of the hon. Prime Minister that those pictures were shown to one person only, that is Mr G., who went to the Police Station on that Sunday.

The Prime Minister: He was the presumed victim of the case, that is why he was shown the pictures.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, although he said that the inquiry is still ongoing - it's a long time since that larceny is alleged to have taken place - has anybody been charged to date?

The Prime Minister: As far as I know, no, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Prime Minister saying that the judicial inquiry into the death of Mr A. K. Ramdhony at Rivière du Rempart Police Station is on and should start in July. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister when I put a supplementary question in the context of my PNQ on 14 November, at one point I asked the hon. Prime Minister that surely it is not only just two junior Police Officers who dealt with the body of Mr Ramdhony, there must have been experts or higher Police Officers. He replied. I put the question, I quote -

“Therefore, I take it that, apart from these two junior officers, no expert, no higher officer was called in.”

The hon. Prime Minister replied -

“I am not saying no, Mr Speaker, Sir. What I am saying is that, from what I see here, they had followed all the procedures that normally they do in cases of hanging (...).”

In the meantime has he had an opportunity to check whether apart from these two Junior Officers, other persons including experts, Forensic experts, higher Police Officers, came in as is usually the case?

The Prime Minister: As I have said, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is an inquiry, I am not going to delve into the inquiry. I am not going to tell the Police that they have to do this, they have to

do that. It is for the Police to conduct the inquiry but I am informed that all the procedures, including forensic evidence, have been taken.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister has confirmed earlier on that he is the owner of that bungalow. Is he aware that in his statement to the Police on that Sunday, Mr G. who claimed to be alone in that bungalow, gave a statement recorded by Police Constable Madhoo and what the Police Constable recorded is that: so and so, self employed, gave a statement therefore to the effect that ‘today Sunday 03, he was sleeping in his room in his bungalow’, which can

only be taken to mean that he is the owner of that bungalow. Has the hon. Prime Minister

....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, order! I do not see how the Prime Minister can be responsible for what a third party has given as statement to the Police.

Mr Bérenger: Precisely whether as owner of the bungalow, he has looked into that and corrected that statement.

Mr Speaker: That is for the Police to decide whether it wants further inquiry to be taken. The Prime Minister has stated publicly that he is the owner of the bungalow and it is for the Police to ask the person who has made the complaint to come and correct his statement.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister has confirmed that he is the owner of that bungalow and elsewhere he has made a statement that he rented that bungalow to somebody. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has a rent book?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! This is a personal matter which cannot be subject matter of a question in the House!

Mr Bérenger: We are talking about the Prime Minister of this country and he claims that he is the owner, that so and so Mr G. was renting and I am entitled to ask whether he has a rent book and whether this revenue is declared to the Mauritius Revenue Authority?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: As far the revenue is concerned, it is a matter for the MRA to take care of and as far as the rent book is concerned, it is a personal matter which cannot be subject - with due respect – to discussion!

Mr Bérenger: But, in his capacity as Prime Minister, I am sure the hon. Prime Minister must have been made aware or is aware that there is, again, a rumour to the effect...

(Interruptions)

Well, I have information, then!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! I did not take objection to the first question which was based on rumour, but I have to take an objection on the second question which is based again on rumour. Standing Order 22(1), subsection (h), makes it clear that any Member can make a statement of facts and put a question on the statement of facts provided he has got *prima facie* evidence that the statement of fact is correct!

Mr Bérenger: To be helpful, I can use another word. My information is to the effect that there is a link between the former owner of that bungalow and a project in the harbour that was granted to some persons with the former owner of the bungalow involved either directly or through a *prête-nom*. I said 'rumour' to allow more scope to the hon. Prime Minister, but I have that information; in his capacity as owner of that bungalow and Prime Minister, has he been made aware of that information? Has the hon. Prime Minister checked and can he inform the House and the country whether this is correct information or not?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I just wish the hon. Leader of the Opposition would learn and not base himself on rumours as he has done in the past. In fact, if he wants clarifications on this, that was a long time ago when the previous owner of the bungalow had a project which he came up to see whether Government could help because Government did not want to agree to and Government decided that it is not in the interest of Government to go ahead with the project as it was being asked for by the former owner of the bungalow and, therefore, it was not done. This was actually refused, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to know.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Can I ask for some order, please!

Mr Bérenger: On the last part of my question, Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister by whom he was made aware that a larceny had taken place and at what time?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just explained; there is a theft in a bungalow that belongs to me. Now, if I had anything to hide, I would have asked the person not to make any declaration. In fact, I encouraged him to make a declaration to the Police. Now,

because I was made aware, I persuaded him to make a declaration to the Police. He did not really want to make a declaration to the Police because he was saying, I think, only some Rs20,000 were stolen. There was no need, but I thought because this bungalow belongs to me and as Prime Minister of this country, there is a security matter involved and he should make a declaration to the Police and that is what I did.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister is repeating what he has said, what took place after he reached the bungalow. My question is: was he made aware thereof by whom and at what time?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a matter of security. I do not ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition what he does in his private time. I get to know that there is a theft in my bungalow and I persuade the person to make a declaration to the Police. In fact, if anything, he should sympathise with me.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister must be aware that Mr G., in his statement to the Police, came as his witness, the watchman of that bungalow. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Police took a statement from that witness and, if yes, whether he is prepared to lay a copy thereof?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not conduct the Police enquiry but I believe they have taken statements from all those involved.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jugnauth, do you have a question?

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Prime Minister has said...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Let the hon. Member put his question!

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Prime Minister has publicly stated that he attended the locus after the larceny. May I know how he attended the locus? At what time he attended the locus and if he was accompanied by his security people?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member should know this is a private matter, that is a private matter for me. Now, there is a question of security involved: which policeman, which car and all these, this is not a matter that we would want to discuss in the House. What is important is that there has been a theft in the bungalow. It is a fact that the

matter was reported because it was my bungalow which was involved. Otherwise, the person might not have reported the matter.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Prime Minister stated that eleven people were arrested and, subsequently, released. Can I know whether the Police had photographs of these eleven people prior to their arrests?

The Prime Minister: I understand that the Police have albums and when they get the additional information, they try to see whether they can get photographs of these persons involved.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House whether the Police phoned SAMU to certify the death of the detainee? If not, can we know whether a Medical Officer accompanied the dead body to *la morgue* for autopsy? If not, why normal procedures have not been followed in this case?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Police tells me that all the normal procedures were followed. I don't know why, the hon. Member is trying to imply that the procedures were not followed. That's what the Police say.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether, apart from members of the Central CID, members of the VIPSU participated in the arrest of these people?

The Prime Minister: Not that I know of. The Police conducted the enquiry and it is for them to see how they want to conduct the enquiry.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Prime Minister has told us that the judicial enquiry will start on 13 July 2012, that is, July of this year. The death, in this case, occurred on 30 July 2011, so that the judicial enquiry is going to start more than one year afterwards! Doesn't the hon. Prime Minister think that, in cases of death in prison or in custody, we should inspire ourselves from the British system and set up the Office of the Coroner who takes over the enquiry immediately after death occurs and starts presiding over the enquiry into the death of the prisoner?

Mr Speaker: I will request the hon. Member to rephrase his question. The hon. Member must make the request to the Commissioner of Police, but not give an opinion.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Prime Minister see to it, either by liaising with the Prime Minister or the State Law Office, to change our law in case of death in prison or in Police Stations, since all types of suspicions arise in these cases so that we could do away with our present legislation and inspire ourselves from the UK, where there the Office of the Coroner has

been set up? I am sure the Prime Minister knows about that. The Coroner takes over the enquiry immediately after dead body is discovered in custody and immediately starts the enquiry, instead of allowing matters to drag on like in our case. It is one year now and the judicial enquiry has not started yet!

The Prime Minister: This is not the first time. This had been there for a long time. The hon. Member has been Attorney General himself and this is the procedure that has been laid down, and this is what is followed. Although, I think, this is a good idea and I can tell the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can I ask the hon. Minister ...

(Interruptions)

I am sorry! Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether in regard to larceny there was a Rolex watch also reported stolen?

The Prime Minister: This is an absolute lie. It was a watch which belonged to the lady. It was a lady's watch, to start with, from what I understand and I believe it was not a Rolex watch because it was sold for Rs200. If you would know, Rolex watches are not sold for Rs200!

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

Dr. S. Boolell: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether there is a report from the Human Rights Commission on this matter as this is the procedure in all cases of death in custody?

The Prime Minister: I think there have been several reports about this. This is perhaps what we could take up. I know the family of the deceased person has made a plaint of summons against the State and the Commissioner of Police. Whether the Human Rights got involved, I cannot say.

Dr. S. Boolell: Just to clarify, the local Human Rights Commission - I think, Mr Seetulsingh is the Chairperson - usually looks into all cases of death in custody within a month of the event and this is why I want to know whether they have been apprised of.

The Prime Minister: I believe that is so, Mr Speaker, Sir. It has been done.

Mr Jugnauth: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister when he was informed by the tenant of the case of the larceny and whether he was told that the tenant had been attacked by the burglars?

The Prime Minister: This is what I explained, Mr Speaker, Sir. I understand that he has said that somebody with a knife has threatened him. I don't think he said he was attacked. I think he was threatened.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister – as his bungalow is like the second residence of the hon. Prime Minister - whether he has made any request to the Commissioner of Police for police sentry?

The Prime Minister: First of all, it is not my second residence - I have another residence at the Desforges Street where my father used to stay and that also belongs to me - yes, since the incident I have asked.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to the answer that the hon. Prime Minister has just given...

Mr Speaker: Ask for clarification!

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, because he has made a public statement to say that the tenant had been attacked. That's why I wanted to know how he has been attacked because now he is saying that he has been threatened. He said that he has been informed that he has been threatened.

(Interruptions)

So, I want to know whether he has been attacked or threatened?

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: There is a difference when you speak Creole and English, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I just said that he said that he has been threatened.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: To follow up on what I asked earlier on, I am given to understand, according to my information, and it is a fact, that Mr G. gave as his witness, a watchman. I had asked whether that watchman gave a statement to the police and if yes, whether the hon. Prime Minister would be prepared to lay a copy. Can I ask further, apart from that watchman, apart from Mr G., was there anybody else present at the time of the alleged incident and, if yes, were statements by the police taken from these other persons?

The Prime Minister: His understanding again is based on rumours. My understanding is that there was nobody else.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister told us that the police enquiry is still ongoing. Will the hon. Prime Minister agree with me that it should be pointed out to the Commissioner of Police that it can't be ongoing forever and that the police enquiry should be completed and the hon. Prime Minister will inform the House whether anybody is charged in relation to that incident?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the police when they have an enquiry in whatever case, they still keep it open until they see who has committed the larceny or whatever. I think that is what they are following.

Mr Speaker: Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister. The Table has been advised that

(Interruptions)

Order! I will wait until there is order in the House for me to go ahead with the proceedings. The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. B/58 has been withdrawn. The Parliamentary B/65 addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister will be replied by hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development if time permits. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

MADAGASCAR – BOIS DE ROSE - SMUGGLING

(No. B/48) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to *bois de rose*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if a case of smuggling thereof from Madagascar was reported in June 2011 and, if so, indicate if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 16 June 2011, the Police obtained intelligence about three vessels coming from Madagascar and one of them might be carrying prohibited goods. Then, on arrival, ADSU and Customs Officers seized six containers of “*Bois de Rose*” logs on board the vessel “Markella” arriving from Madagascar. The containers were meant for trans-shipment to China and Hong Kong.

The goods were seized by Customs as they were declared as containing “Dried Beans”, “Worked Horn” and “Aquaris” on the manifest of the vessel.

In the light of information received, Police inquiry is continuing. On completion thereof, the case file will be sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether he has been made aware if the name of a local personality is cited as being part of the Madagascar-Mauritius-China connection in the smuggling of ‘Bois de Rose’?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order now!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, an enquiry is going on. Many names have been cited, but an enquiry is going on, including local people here.

Mr Bérenger: Can hon. Prime Minister inform the House what has happened to the *cargaison* of “*Bois de Rose*”. Has it been returned to Madagascar? Has it been handed over to the Embassy of Madagascar?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Soodhun!

The Prime Minister: The *cargaison* is still impounded here in Mauritius. It has not been returned. There has been a request.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I did not see him. I am looking at the hon. Prime Minister. I heard his voice.

The Prime Minister: There has been a request at one point that the “*Bois de Rose*” be returned to Madagascar. Then, there was a further request that because of financial reasons that they wish that this is sold here on an open market, I think by tender or whatever. But this has not been done. It is still impounded here.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, surely this is matter - it is not a first time, unfortunately, it won't probably be the last time that there is traffic of “*Bois de Rose*” between Madagascar and Mauritius – I am sure the hon. Prime Minister will agree with me that this is too big for just a police enquiry to handle. Names have been thrown around clearly. Names on the Opposition side and Government side have been....

(Interruptions)

... including that of a senior, very senior Minister and his ‘*tantine*’. Doesn't the hon. Prime Minister agree with me - to be fair to one and all - to stop such insinuations and allegations and that ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger:... a Select Committee of the House chaired by the hon. Foreign Minister should be set up to clear the matter once and for all?

The Prime Minister: Again I will tell the hon. Leader of the Opposition to get his facts right. In fact, it is the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance who informed the Customs. It was him who informed and he talked - I think - to the Prime Minister of Madagascar.

(Interruptions)

He phoned the vice-Prime Minister who informed the MRA. So, it is not anybody on this side, maybe on the other side!

(Interruptions)

The hon. Leader of the Opposition himself said just now that this is an enquiry which may be beyond – I heard him say something to the effect that it is beyond our police enquiry. Now, maybe, he could tell me how is it beyond police enquiry? A Select Committee of the

House will be able to enquire! That is not so. In fact, the enquiry is ongoing. There are correspondences between the anti-corruption institution in Madagascar who is involved and an enquiry is still ongoing.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister

(Interruptions)

Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, if he has been made aware...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, order!

Ms Anquetil: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, if he has been made aware of a Malagasy newspaper article mentioning the existence of a recording ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: On a point of order, this is not acceptable.

Mr Speaker: There is a point of order. Let me listen to it!

Mr Bérenger: The Standing Orders have it that we can't refer to press articles in that way.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I have looked into the matter very carefully, not now, but many times and only Ministers cannot base their answers on press reports. Members of Parliament who are not connected with Government can cite or refer.

Ms Anquetil: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, if he has been made aware of a Malagasy newspaper article mentioning the existence of a recording *compromettant, impliquant un politicien mauricien qui aurait apparemment donné des instructions pour la supervision de l'abattage des arbres ...*

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: On a point of order ...

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Normally, it has been the practice and decided by the House, that point of orders during Question time are taken after Question time is over...

(Interruptions)

Yes, we have rulings of this House - unless, I have to intervene immediately. Let me listen to the point of order now!

(Interruptions)

There are rulings in this House, not made by me, but by predecessors that point of orders at Question time, should be taken at the end. I can give you a series of rulings. Not even from here, but from the House of Commons as well.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask that these rulings be circulated?

Mr Speaker: I will definitely circulate the rulings.

Ms Anquetil: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House if he has been made aware of a Malagasy newspaper article mentioning the existence of a recording *compromettant, impliquant un politicien mauricien qui aurait apparemment donné des instructions pour la supervision de l'abattage des arbres de bois de rose jusqu'à leur embarquement à bord du cargo ?*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Henry, could you please keep quiet? You are not in a marketplace here! Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, the BIANCO which is a Malagasy anti-corruption bureau, has forwarded that copy and they say they are in possession of a recording of a phone conversation implicating a Mauritian politician in this smuggling case.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Prime Minister say whether after the visit of the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to Madagascar he had made a proposal to come to an amicable settlement in this matter and to simply return the six containers to Madagascar?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: In fact, again, Mr Speaker, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Jugnauth is wrong, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance never met his counterpart in Madagascar and never made that request.

Mr Duval: May I say something?

Mr Speaker: If you have a point of personal explanation, you will have to make it later on. Next question, hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I make a personal explanation on this matter?

Mr Speaker: No, after Question time! Hon. Mrs Labelle!

MR Y. D. - ARREST - 21 FEB 2012

(No. B/49) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if, on 21 February 2012, one Mr Y. D., was arrested by Officers of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit and brought to the Rose Hill Police Station, and if so, indicate -

- (a) the reasons therefor;
- (b) if the said Mr Y. D., had been subject to any arrest, prior to February 2012, and, if so, the charge retained against him, if any, and
- (c) if any abuse of power by the said Officers against him has been reported and if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker Sir, in regard

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, now!

Mr Jugnauth: I heard the hon. Xavier-Luc Duval addressing to me, saying: '*voleur, to pe coquin cash*'.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: He has to withdraw.

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I said the mot '*voleur*', but I don't know why the Member took it for himself.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 21 February 2012 at Rose Hill, a team from the Western Division ADSU stopped a private car driven by one Mr Y.D. during a routine stop and search operation.

Although the person protested, he did not object to the Police searching his car. As it was during peak hours and upon request from the Police Mr Y.D. voluntarily accompanied the Police

to Rose Hill District Headquarters for the search. Nothing incriminating was found on the person of Mr Y.D. or in his car. Police did not arrest him.

However, the Police noticed that the insurance vignette was missing. Mr Y.D. was warned that it is an offence to drive a motor vehicle without an insurance vignette and he was booked accordingly.

Furthermore, as the driving licence produced by Mr Y.D. was defaced, he was issued with a memo for the obtention of a new driving licence, to be produced to the Police. Thereafter, he was allowed to go.

In regard to part (b) of the question, according to Police records, Mr Y.D. has not been arrested by the Police prior to February 2012.

As for part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there has been no abuse of authority by the Police and they have acted within the legal framework.

Mr Speaker, Sir, two days after the incident, Mr Y.D. made a complaint at the Complaint Investigation Bureau (CIB), wherein he stated that ADSU Officers signalled him to stop and told him that they would search his car. He resisted and no search was undertaken. He opined that he had been arrested without any lawful reason.

The statement of Mr Y.D. has been recorded by the CIB and that Bureau will conduct an investigation into the facts and circumstances of the case to determine whether the allegations are founded, following which necessary action will be initiated.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I heard the hon. Prime Minister stating that it was a routine check. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether officers of Anti-drug and Smuggling Unit usually carry out routine checks?

The Prime Minister: Yes, they do.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that there is a perception, even a very strong feeling, that people with the physical appearance of Mr Y.D. suffers from such attitude by some police officers?

The Prime Minister: I hope that is not the case. But then, you can't prevent the Police from also stop and searching vehicles, but I hope that is not the case.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the reason of this question is not to point fingers to anybody. I have to put this straightforward. But if we have a problem, I think we have to name it

so that we can see what can be done on that issue because such attitude does exist, in other countries too.

Maybe, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister knows the case of Diallo, a classic in social psychology, who was shot 41 times because of such prejudice. My question is whether we are going to look into that. If this can be the case, will the hon. Prime Minister ask the Commissioner of Police to, at least, look into that possibility of prejudice which results in discriminatory attitude or behaviour towards people of some particular physical appearance?

The Prime Minister: In fact, already there has been a complaint. The CID is looking into that and I am sure they will take that into consideration because this is what, I think, Mr Y. D. has been complaining about.

Mrs Labelle: I heard the hon. Prime Minister saying that Mr Y. D. has never been arrested prior to this case. Has the hon. Prime Minister been made aware that one year before this incident the same gentleman was arrested, all his personal belongings were thrown on the street and so on? Has this information been given to the hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of this Mr Speaker, Sir. I am told that he has not been arrested prior to this.

MBC - EURO 2012 FOOTBALL MATCHES

(No. B/50) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to football, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to –

- (a) if the matches of the Euro 2012 which will be played in Poland and Ukraine will be broadcast live and, if so, indicate the number thereof and, if not, why not, and
- (b) the reasons why the matches of the first phase of the recent African Nations Cup played in Gabon and Guinée Equatorial were not broadcasted live.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the Corporation will broadcast eight live matches of the EURO 2012, namely, four group stage matches, two quarter final matches, one semi final and the final. The MBC will also broadcast the highlights of all the football matches of the EURO 2012 competition.

I am further informed by the Director-General that there is only one package which is available to public service broadcasters for the African region.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General that matches of the African Cup of Nations 2012 were available only through a package comprising 32 African Cup of Nations matches and 16 African Nations Junior Championship matches. This package had to be taken as a whole. After prolonged negotiations, the Corporation was able to secure the right for the live broadcast of the only two semi finals and the final of the African Cup of Nations 2012.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that many Mauritians complain that they have to pay Rs100 monthly and they do not get football matches broadcast as in private channels, instead they have to watch the Labour team playing every night.

Mr Speaker: The second part of the question is not allowed and I will warn the hon. Member that if he continues to behave like this, I will have to take sanctions.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member should realise that Rs100 are very, very low, probably the lowest in the world – probably, I said. As I explained, Mr Speaker, Sir, that was the only package which is available to public service broadcasters for the African region, if he is talking about the African Cup. As I said, the package comprised 32 African Cup of Nations matches and 16 African nations junior championship matches. You had to take the package, but after prolonged negotiations - he might want to know that the package costs €50,000 - the Corporation was able to secure the live broadcast of the only two semi-finals and the final at a cost of €8000. There is a great difference between €50,000 and €8000. That is the package that was available. The MBC tried to negotiate and eventually managed to have what I have just described.

Mr Speaker: The issue has been adequately debated. Hon. Uteem, next question!

CARGO HANDLING CORPORATION - GOVERNMENT SHARES

(No. B/51) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd., he will state if Government is proposing to sell its shares held therein and, if so, indicate the

- (a) projected incidence thereof on the –
 - (i) employees, and
 - (ii) management thereof, and
- (b) concession agreements granted thereto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the project for a Strategic Partner for the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd (CHCL) dates as far back as July 2001. The then Government agreed that the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) would divest all its shares which would be taken over by the Strategic Partner of international repute in order to enhance its operational efficiency and its know-how. It was also then agreed to seek the assistance of the World Bank for Consultancy Services to provide the best guidance on the various procedures for the selection of the Strategic Partner.

In February 2003, following recommendation of the then Ministry of Economic Development, Financial Services and Corporate Affairs, it was decided to put the project on hold until such time when the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd attained financial sustainability.

However, when my Government came to power in 2005, we decided to review this project in order to enable the development of Port Louis Harbour into a major transshipment hub and enable it to capture the substantial container traffic growth potential in the region. Accordingly, in March 2007, Government agreed to the following 3-pronged strategy to reposition Port Louis Harbour as a hub in the region -

- (i) both CHCL and MPA would pursue their investment programme in terms of procurement of new equipment to enhance service level;
- (ii) CHCL and MPA would work out and implement such strategies and labour practices to improve productivity and efficiency in the port; and
- (iii) identify Strategic Partners for cargo handling operation through a competitive international bidding process.

In June 2007, Government decided that the services of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) be enlisted for the implementation of the Strategic Partnership Project for the Corporation.

In July 2008, following several rounds of consultation an agreement for the enlistment of the services of IFC as financial services advisor for the Strategic Partnership Project was signed.

In February 2009, Government agreed to the launching of the Request for Pre-qualifications bids for the Strategic Partnership Project.

In March 2009, tender notices for the Request for Pre-qualifications exercise were published in the local press, through the Government Information Service as well as in 'The Economist'. Moreover, notice was circulated to all the Foreign Missions accredited in Mauritius and given wide publicity abroad through the Mauritius Missions.

As at the closing date, on 16 April 2009, six firms responded to the Request for Pre-qualifications bid.

The Pre-qualification bids were evaluated by the IFC which recommended that five applicants were compliant. An independent Pre-qualification Committee was appointed by the External Communications Division to review the recommendation and the latter confirmed that the evaluation process was conducted in a fair and systematic manner in accordance with established criteria.

In September 2011, the request for proposal documents was launched to the five Pre-qualified bidders for their comments and views. The documents consisted of -

- (i) the request for proposal Memorandum;
- (ii) the new concession Agreement;
- (iii) the share sales Agreement, and
- (iv) the shareholder Agreement.

A pre-bid meeting was held on 05 and 06 October 2011 with the pre-selected bidders to fine-tune the documents.

In December 2011, Government agreed to the final bid documents being launched to the Pre-qualified bidders. The bid documents were launched by IFC on 24 February 2012. As at the closing date on 25 April 2012, only one bid had been received. The Bid Evaluation Committee, which examined the offer, found it to be non-compliant and non-responsive.

Mr Speaker, Sir, notwithstanding the bidding exercise and in view of the deteriorating financial and operational situation at the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd, the Board agreed, in March 2012, to appoint KPMG to perform an organisational and financial review with the following terms of reference -

- assessment of the issues faced by CHCL;
- ranking the issues in order of priority;

- working with management to implement a plan of action, and
- conducting business process assessment with a view to optimizing use of resources and enhancing performance.

The study started on 09 April 2012 and is expected to be completed by October this year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the circumstances, Government is envisaging the setting up of a Ministerial Committee to consider the way forward.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister mentioned that there was only one response to the request for proposal. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he is prepared to disclose the terms of the Request for Proposal and table copy of the documentations so that we can be apprised of what exactly we were looking for in a strategic partner?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, if I were to do that the whole matter will not be able to go forward because other firms which are bidding will know what are the bids that have been offered. So, I don't think that is proper.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS - HOLDING

(No. B/52) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the municipal elections, he will state when same will be held.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I note that the hon. Member is only referring to Municipal Elections and not to Village Council Elections which are also due.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Can I have some silence, please!

(Interruptions)

Some silence! I am looking at the hon. Prime Minister. Some silence, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members are interrupting the hon. Prime Minister from answering the question. That's all! I am asking for silence, please!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the New Local Government Bill was passed in the National Assembly on 07 December 2011 and the Act was proclaimed on 15 December 2011.

This new Act has brought radical and unprecedented changes that will reinforce grassroots democracy in Mauritius and will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of local authorities in service delivery and in improving the living standard of people in our local communities. The new Act has, in fact, brought over 30 changes to the previous legislation and I would like to mention a few of the most important ones -

- (i) for the first time the city of Port Louis as well as the post of Lord Mayor are being legally recognised, which was not the case in either of the previous two Local Government Acts. Furthermore, the village of Pailles has been added to the city limits of Port Louis;
- (ii) the new Local Government Act allows for new towns to be created at any time later on, through a relatively simple procedure;
- (iii) all urban local authorities have been divided into wards with three candidates each. Hence, the total number of Municipal Councillors will be reduced from 126 to 90, but the wards are going to be smaller and therefore the Councillors will be closer to the electorate;
- (iv) the twin District Councils of Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart, Moka/Flacq, and Grand Port/Savanne will be separated so as to make the administration of the rural areas become more manageable. This proposal has been on the table for 40 years nearly;
- (v) another historic measure introduced was to address the under representation of women at decision-making positions at local Government level. In fact, all local authorities' elections will now require that not more than two thirds of candidates are of the same sex.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: This measure will also apply to the reserve group list. With these measures, the number of women candidates will rise significantly in both Municipal and Village Council Elections.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the Opposition had expressed their discontent over the new ward boundaries – in fact, the MSM Opposition I think – accusing the Government of gerrymandering which was, of course, totally unfounded and unjustified. Some Members of

the Opposition continued to protest even after the former President had given his assent to the Bill. The MSM petitioned the then President who started enquiries with all those concerned, but to our surprise the MSM then decided to withdraw its objections and protests as if these objections had suddenly disappeared, as if they were not relevant any more.

In my intervention on the new Local Government Bill in December last, I clearly stated that we, in Government, do not intend to postpone local elections for another year and that these elections would be held as soon as practicable. I also explained the reasons why the elections could not be held in the first quarter of 2012.

The timing of elections of Councillors to a Municipal City Council or Municipal Town Councils is governed by Section 11(1) of the Local Government Act 2011, which reads as follows -

(1) The election of Councillors to a Municipal City Council or Municipal Town Council shall be –

(a) held in 2012 and thereafter every 6 years on such date as the President shall appoint, and

(b) conducted in accordance with the Representation of the People Act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Section 44 of the Representation of the People Act provides as follows -

“44. Elections to the National Assembly, Rodrigues Regional Assembly, a Municipal Council or a Village Council shall be conducted in such manner as may be prescribed.”

I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, by the Electoral Commissioner that in view of the Changes brought about by the Local Government Act of 2011, new “Municipal City and Town Council Elections Regulations 2012” are being prepared by the Electoral Commissioner’s Office, the Electoral Supervisory Commission and the Attorney-General’s Office, under section 44 of the Representation of the People Act, to replace the former Municipal Council Elections Regulations of 1958.

The date of the elections will be decided once these Regulations are finalised.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the answer given by the hon. Prime Minister on 07 December 2011 that he has spoken to the Electoral Commissioner, will he give an undertaking to the House that he will again talk to the Electoral Commissioner with a view to expedite matters?

The Prime Minister: First of all, when I answered that question, I do not think there was a protest from the MSM had not taken shape yet. So, all this delayed matters. As I explained, he is already doing what has to be done.

Mr Nagalingum: Will the hon. Prime Minister consider introducing legislation as to ensure that no municipal elections are postponed in the future and that they will meet legal deadline?

The Prime Minister: I remind the hon. Member that when his party was in Government, municipal elections had been postponed, not once, twice.

Mr Bhagwan: Will the hon. Prime Minister give a guarantee to the House, the country and the nation and also the taxpayers who are suffering from the mismanagement of the local authorities, a clear deadline, a clear indication, when the municipal elections will be held?

The Prime Minister: I just explained, Mr Speaker, Sir. I hope he does not want me to read all this again.

(Interruptions)

I explained....

(Interruptions)

You might want to know as much as you want, but you will know it when it happens.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Ameer Meea!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Prime Minister stated that when the regulations would be finalised by the Electoral Supervisory Commission, then the elections could be held. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what is the time frame for the Electoral Supervisory Commission to finalise the regulations?

The Prime Minister: I would have thought the hon. Member would know that I cannot go and direct them now to do the regulations, to sit night and day and do the regulations. It is up to them, they are independent and they will do it as soon as they are ready.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! The Table has just been advised that PQ Nos. B/53, B/54 and B/59 have been withdrawn. Questions addressed to hon. Ministers!

**MAURITIUS DUTY FREE PARADISE LIMITED - MR V. C., HUMAN
RESOURCES MANAGER - APPOINTMENT**

(No. B/53) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Mr V. C., Human Resources Manager of the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Limited, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the company, information as to –

- (a) if the Board thereof had taken any decision against him during his first tenure of office thereat, prior to his dismissal therefrom and, if so, indicate the –
 - (i) date thereof, and
 - (ii) reasons therefor, and
- (b) the date on which he was re-appointed, indicating his present terms and conditions of appointment.

(Withdrawn)

**MBC V/S PRINCIPAL LABOUR & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OFFICER -
JUDGMENT**

(No. B/54) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board thereof, information as to if, following the Industrial Court judgment in the case of the Principal Labour & Industrial Relations Officer v/s the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, which found the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation guilty as charged on the three counts –

- (a) if the fines imposed have been paid, and
- (b) the actions taken, if any, against the Director General thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**MGI/RABINDRANATH TAGORE INSTITUTE – DIRECTOR-GENERAL –
QUALIFICATIONS**

(No. B/55) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Mr B. M., Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute/Rabindranath Tagore Institute, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mahatma Gandhi Institute/Rabindranath Tagore Institute, information as to –

- (a) his academic qualifications, indicating his previous experience, if any, in a similar capacity in the academic field, and
- (b) the salary, benefits and perks to which he is entitled.

Reply: I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Member to the fact that Mr B. M. is the Director-General and not the Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the Rabindranath Tagore Institute.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that Mr B. M. holds the following academic qualifications –

- (i) BA Honours English, Delhi University;
- (ii) Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism, Bombay;
- (iii) Diploma in Labour and Cooperative Studies, Israel, and
- (iv) Advanced Management Programme, University of Mauritius.

In regard to Mr B. M's experience in the academic field, I am informed that he is a founder Trustee of SSR Medical College, Belle Rive. He was also a Board Member of the Mauritius College of the Air for five years. In addition, he was responsible for the setting up of the Knowledge Channel at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation dealing with institutions like the Indira Gandhi National Open University for connecting media programming for education, health and cross-cultural communication.

Mr B. M. was also Adviser to the then Minister of Finance from 1984 to 1991. He was Chairman and part-time General Manager of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation from 1986 to 1991. Subsequently, he served as full-time General Manager of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation from 1991 to 1995. Mr B. M. was the Director-General of the MBC from 1995 to 1996 and from 2005 to 2009.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that Mr B. M. is drawing salary and other benefits, in accordance with the recommendations made in the Pay Research Bureau Report 2008.

POLICE – PROMOTION EXERCISE

(No. B/56) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the promotion exercise from the grade of Inspector of Police to that of Chief Inspector of Police and that from the grade of Chief Inspector of Police to that of Assistant Superintendent of Police respectively, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question No. B/754 at our sitting of 18 October 2011, wherein I informed the House that promotion in the Police Force falls within the purview of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission, and that the filling of vacancies at the bottom of the hierarchy is ongoing.

As at to date some 750 officers have already been promoted in different grades.

In regard to the promotion of Inspector of Police to the grade of Chief Inspector of Police and to that from the grade of Chief Inspector of Police to that of Assistant Superintendent of Police, I am informed that an assessment exercise is being finalised and, following finalisation, the report will be submitted to the Disciplined Forces Service Commission.

BEL OMBRE – NATIONAL COAST GUARD – VESSEL

(No. B/57) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Station of the National Coast Guard, at Bel Ombre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Coast Guard, information as to if it is equipped with a vessel that can travel safely beyond the reef and, if not, indicate the measures that will be taken to build up the capacity thereof therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the National Coast Guard Post at Bel Ombre is manned by one Police Sergeant and 20 Police Constables under the supervision of an Area Commander based at National Coast Guard Post at Black River.

I am also informed that most of the sea activities in the region of Bel Ombre are carried out inside the lagoon. The National Coast Guard Post at Bel Ombre is currently equipped with an Avon craft and a pirogue.

The team at the Bel Ombre National Coast Guard Post is supported by one Defender Boat and one Halmatic Boat based at Black River National Coast Guard Post and two Heavy Duty Boats based at Souillac National Coast Guard Post for search and rescue operations in the region of Bel Ombre. Depending on the nature of the search and rescue operations, additional support is provided, such as the deployment of the Coast Guard ships, NCG aircrafts and Police helicopters.

In order to further improve the service provided by the Coast Guard at Bel Ombre, the Police has initiated tendering procedures on 19 March 2012 for the acquisition of two Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats which can operate within a radius of about 6 kilometres into the sea.

SALE BY LEVY – COMMISSION OF INQUIRY – SETTING UP

(No. B/58) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the sale by levy, he will state if he proposes to set up a Commission of Inquiry to revisit same and, if so when.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS DUTY FREE PARADISE LTD. – MANAGER – INQUIRY

(No. B/59) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the case of a manager of the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Ltd., found in possession of property belonging to the company, on or about January 2012, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of police, information

as to if same has been reported to the police and if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto, indicating the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CHILDREN – SEXUAL ABUSE

(No. B/60) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to sexual abuse, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, in which the victim is a child, and is awaiting trial, indicating in each case, the date on which the offence was committed.

Reply: According to information provided by the Master and Registrar, Supreme Court, there are 187 cases of sexual abuse involving children, out of which 143 are pending trial; 37 are at the *proforma* stage; four are awaiting judgement. The Court's ruling has been reserved in one case and two cases are pending submission by Counsel for the parties.

As a matter of policy, all Magistrates give priority to cases involving children victims. In many of these cases, the disposal thereof also depends on the availability of the Counsels appearing for the accused party. In some cases, Counsels often take preliminary points in law, which have to be heard and disposed of first before the trial proper starts and witnesses are called.

Consultations are underway for the preparation of a Children's Bill which aims at strengthening the existing legislations on child protection. The opportunity will be taken to make provision for cases involving child victims of sexual offences being heard expeditiously by the Court.

The Police have taken a series of measures aiming at the prevention of such cases. In that context, the Police Family Protection Unit (PFPU) and the *Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs* carry out sensitisation campaigns targeting children and women on, *inter alia*, protective behaviours and personal safety. In primary and secondary schools, pupils are educated, amongst others, on types of behaviour likely to place them at risk, as well as discipline and personal safety. Special attention is given to sensitising primary school children about good

and bad touch under the Protective Behaviour Programme, and the Police also distribute a copy of “*Le Toucher Booklet*” to these pupils.

On its part, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is in the process of setting up a Victims and Witness Support Unit staffed with a full-time Victims Liaison Officer. The *raison d’être* is to advise, guide and support the victims, especially the children, through the Court process, give necessary information, advise on their rights, in cases where pressure or intimidation is being exerted on them. A Victims Charter will be put in place and distributed to the public to explain victims’ and children’s rights in a near future.

The issue of children as victims is central to the work of the prosecuting authority and a workshop with the help of experts from the USA is scheduled in the first week of June this year to consider how children who are victims of crime and have cases in Court may be better treated and protected during Police enquiry and the Court process.

REHABILITATION YOUTH CENTRES – JUVENILES – NUMBER

No. B/61) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to each of the Rehabilitation Youth Centres for boys and girls respectively, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of juveniles who are currently detained thereat, indicating the number thereof who –

- (a) are on remand, indicating in each case, since when, and
- (b) are serving a sentence.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions under which the Rehabilitation Youth Centres operate, that there are currently nine boys and one girl on remand at these Centres.

One of the boys is on remand since January 2011 and the remaining eight are on remand since the beginning of this year.

There is only one girl on remand since April 2011.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am further informed that there are seven boys and 25 girls currently serving sentence at the Rehabilitation Youth Centres.

PITON – POLICE QUARTERS

(No. B/62) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Police Quarters situated at Piton, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof which –
 - (i) are occupied, indicating the names of the occupiers thereof;
 - (ii) are unoccupied;
 - (iii) have been converted into offices, giving a list thereof and indicating when they have been converted and
- (b) if consideration will be given for their pulling down and for the construction of a modern Divisional Headquarters on the site thereof.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there are twenty Police Quarters at Piton. Ten are occupied, seven have been converted into offices, one has been earmarked for demolition for the construction of the Detention Centre and two needs major renovation.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Divisional Headquarters which is situated at Piton covers the District of Pamplemousses and Riviere du Rempart. It is accommodated in a one storey building constructed in the year 1958 with a floor area of 245 m².

Several repairs and renovation works have been carried out over the building including a major renovation in 2006 at the cost of Rs3.5 m. The building is in a good state and offers convenient working conditions.

The Police is planning to have all the offices located in only one building with modern logistics and facilities. It is in their programme to construct a new Divisional Headquarters next to the upcoming Piton Detention Centre, and two Sub-Divisional Headquarters at Trou aux Biches Police Station and at Goodlands respectively.

LINE BARRACKS – DRIVING TESTS – WAITING TIME

(No. B/63) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Licensing Office of the Traffic Branch at the Line Barracks, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if there are daily long queues of members of the public who attend thereat for the purpose of submitting application, payment of fees and seeking appointment for the oral and practical driving tests and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given for measures to be taken to reduce the waiting time therefor, including arranging for the possibility of same to be effected at the Divisional Police Headquarters.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on average some 1,600 persons call daily at the Licensing Office of the Traffic Branch situated at Line Barracks in relation to, *inter alia*, submission of applications, payment of fees and seeking of appointments for oral and practical driving tests. Such services are offered to the public from 07.00 hrs to 17.00 hrs during weekdays, and from 07.00 hrs to 12.00 hrs on Saturdays. I am informed that there is no long queue at the Licensing Office all throughout the day except between 11.30 hrs and 12.30 hrs when general members of the public take advantage of their lunch time to call at the Traffic Branch.

In order to ensure that the services offered to the public by the Licensing Office are delivered in an effective, efficient and customer-friendly manner, the Police have put into place the following measures –

- (i) appointments for persons who have applied for provisional licences for autocycles, motorcycles and private cars through the Online Government portal, are scheduled at staggered hours in two slots, in alphabetical order;
- (ii) specific counters have been set up for different services, that is, the issue of provisional driving licences, fixing of appointments for oral tests, and delivery of driving licences;
- (iii) counters are kept open all throughout the day, including lunch time, during the hours the services are offered to the public;

- (iv) whenever there are long queues at particular sections, personnel from other sections are redeployed so as to assist their colleagues, and
- (v) payment of fees by way of credit cards has been introduced.

I am informed that in order to further improve the service offered to the public at the Licensing Office, the Police is envisaging the introduction of the following measures shortly –

- (i) appointments for persons who have applied through the Online Government Portal to be scheduled at staggered times in four slots, instead of two as is presently the case;
- (ii) extension of the Online Government Portal for applications for other types of driving licences, as currently it is restricted to applications for provisional licences (learners) for autocycles, motorcycles and private cars;
- (iii) computerisation of the whole system of the Traffic Branch, including the system of recording, processing, issuing and controlling driving licences, and
- (iv) provision of additional customer counters and extension of the waiting area with a view to creating a better and more conducive environment for members of the public calling at the Licensing Office. This project is being worked out with the assistance of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms under its Counter/Customer Services Scheme. The details of the project are being worked out.

Government is looking for a long term solution to address the whole issue of provision of modern facilities for processing, issuing and controlling driving licences. It has already been announced in the Government Programme 2012-2015 that Government is going ahead with the project of setting up of a Driving Education and Testing Centre which would review and upgrade learner driving skills and testing standards. Amongst its functions, this centre will carry out, with the assistance of the Police, all driving and riding tests and issue driving licences to the public. The services currently offered by the Licensing Office of the Traffic Branch will thus be transferred to the centre which is expected to be operational in 2013.

AMICALE CASE – PETITION

(No. B/64) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether he will state if he has received a petition in regard to the Amicale case, and if so, indicate the action taken, if any.

Reply: Indeed, I have received a petition recently regarding the Amicale case and I have forwarded it to the Director of Public Prosecutions for his consideration.

LARCENY CASES – REMAND

(No. B/66) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of persons presently on remand, indicating the number thereof who has been remanded in connection with cases of the offence of larceny and/or of related offences.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that as at 10 May 2012, 1,061 persons are on remand at the different prisons and 66 in Police cells and Detention Centres. Out of 1,061 persons who are remanded to jail, 515 are there in connection with cases of larceny and/or of related offences. Out of 66 persons on remand in Police cells and Detention Centres, 38 of them concern cases of larceny and/or of related offences.

POLICE – VACANCIES

(No. B/67) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police –

- (a) information as to when the Temporary Inspectors will be appointed Inspectors, and
- (b) table a list of the existing vacancies thereat.

Reply: Promotion in the Police Force falls under the purview of Disciplined Forces Service Commission and Standing Order 16 on promotion.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that following a Competitive Examination carried out by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission, 117 Police Sergeants and two Women Police Sergeants were offered promotion on 17 May 2011, as Inspector of Police/Woman Police Inspector in a temporary capacity for a period of not less than 12 months as from the date of assumption of duty.

These Temporary Police Inspectors will be considered for promotion in a substantive capacity after they have successfully completed the Inspector's Cadre course and have been favourably reported upon on their work, conduct and attendance during their temporary period.

All the 119 officers have already successfully completed the Inspector's Cadre course and reports on their work, conduct and attendance are being processed.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Commissioner of Police will forward his recommendations to the Disciplined Forces Service Commission for the appointment of the 119 Officers in a substantive capacity as from 17 May 2012.

CRICKET – SPORT DISCIPLINE - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/68) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of cricket as a sport discipline in Mauritius, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me, first of all, to express my appreciation to the hon. Member for her interest in Cricket.

I wish to inform the House that Cricket has been played since 1831 by the British mostly during the colonial period. In 1901, the Bahemia family founded the Young Muslim Cricket Club. In 1946, the then Governor of Mauritius, H.E. Donald Mackenzie took a major step by organising a tournament leading to the Culzean Cup. This tournament gave players the opportunity to show their skills. In 1961, new clubs namely Mauritius Sports Club and Annovil Club were formed.

With the departure of the British in 1968 Cricket activities ...

Mr Speaker: I think the hon. Minister is making a history; there is no need for that. There is a simple question: when the matter will be taken at his level.

Mr Ritoo: In 2007, an Astro turf was laid at the sports ground in Vacoas and this has led to a resurgence of Cricket in Mauritius both at senior and school levels. We now have 10 clubs and 12 teams at school level.

In 2009, the Federation of Cricket clubs was formed with a view to further democratising and developing this discipline in Mauritius. A plot of 13 acres of land at Belle Vue Harel adjoining the Anjalay Stadium was leased to the SSR National Cricket Grounds Trust for the construction of the Cricket Stadium which would consist of 3 Cricket grounds with Astro turf pitches.

During the second phase of the project a main stadium including a club house which will accommodate the Federation of Cricket clubs and an indoor Cricket school with training facilities will be constructed.

Today, I am more than satisfied of the work accomplished so far for the promotion of cricket in Mauritius.

I have to inform the House that the coming into operation of the SSR National Cricket Grounds will, no doubt, give a new impetus to cricket and will undoubtedly bring a change in the sports panorama in Mauritius.

Ms Anquetil: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Can he give a realistic time frame for the implementation of the project?

Mr Speaker: As a sport discipline.

Mr Ritoo: Actually, the ground is under construction, but it will take some time before the cricket ground is completed.

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS – RENOVATION AND UPGRADING - ALLOCATION

(No. B/69) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the allocation of Rs500,000 budgeted for the renovation and upgrading of the Government Schools in Mauritius and in Rodrigues, he will state where matters stand as to the use made thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has already initiated arrangements for the disbursement to every Government Primary and Secondary School of the grant of Rs 500,000 provided for in this year's budget.

The objectives of the special grant are to enable Government Primary and Secondary Schools to renovate and improve the school infrastructural environment and purchase modern pedagogical ICT equipment to enhance teaching and learning.

This will give more autonomy to heads of Schools and respective PTAs in the improvements of school infrastructure and thus develop a greater sense of ownership in the management and enhancement of the school environment.

The modalities and conditions for allocation of the special grant are as follows -

- (a) Government Primary School with one stream - Rs 300,000 per school
- (b) Government Primary School with two streams and above - Rs 500,000 per school
- (c) State Secondary Schools - Rs 500,000 per school

To be eligible for the grant, PTAs should -

- (i) be fully registered with the Registrar of Associations,
- (ii) produce audited accounts showing evidence that funds have been used for the benefit of the schools, and
- (iii) the accounts should be available for verification by my Ministry, as and when required.

PTAs have been requested to ensure proper utilisation of funds, in line with sound financial and procurement procedures, with quotations and tenders being sought from at least three prospective suppliers.

Furthermore, schools are required to submit their projects in line with their respective School Development Plan. A circular to that effect was issued to heads of Government Primary and Secondary Schools in December 2011 requesting them to make proposals by 27 January 2012.

As at 11 May 2012, 207 out of 214 Government Primary Schools and all the 69 Secondary Schools have already submitted their projects. A total of Rs105,019,530 out of the Rs150 m. provided for this item has been disbursed.

As regards Rodrigues, a sum of Rs4.8 m. has been transferred to the Rodrigues administration to cater for the needs of the 10 Government Primary Schools.

Ms Anquetil: Je remercie le ministre pour sa réponse. Est-ce que le ministre pourrait informer la Chambre si cette allocation de R 500,000 concerne uniquement le *upgrading* et la rénovation des bâtiments ou si cette allocation s'adresse aussi à la maintenance des infrastructures sportives des écoles ?

Dr. Bunwaree: For maintenance, we have a specific budget for that. It's for the work that I have already mentioned. Even for ICT infrastructure, there is a list of projects. This has to be discussed at the level of the school with the collaboration of the zone.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister circulate a list of all schools that have been allocated this fund?

Dr. Bunwaree: Almost all schools. I have mentioned 207 out of 214, and the rest will be forthcoming. As regards secondary schools, all the 69 schools have been allocated this fund.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just given us the amount which has been disbursed. Can he tell us how many schools, in fact, have benefited from the Rs500,000?

Dr. Bunwaree: I have a list of all the projects. I can circulate that list school by school.
(APPENDIX)

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether a close monitoring is done to make sure that the fund is being rightly used and what measures are going to be taken against the PTAs and the schools that are not making proper use of that grant?

Dr. Bunwaree: Well, they will be taken to task, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Ribot: I would also like to know from the hon. Minister, Mr Speaker, Sir, whether it is the common procedure to give the cheque of that grant to heads of schools in presence of Ministers and MPs as was the case in Quatre Bornes?

Dr. Bunwaree: Well, this is a question for the PTA to decide.

FLOREAL – MEDI CLINIC - RECONSTRUCTION

(No. B/70) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the proposed reconstruction of a Medi clinic in Floréal, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the proposed reconstruction of the Medi Clinic at Floréal, the position is as follows –

- i. Initially, it was planned to construct a new Area Health Centre to replace the existing Community Health Centre. However, following several meetings held on the issue, my Ministry has opted for the construction of a Medi clinic of the same type design as that of Plaine Verte and Triolet Medi clinics. The project has already been approved by the Project Plan Committee (PPC) and the cost is estimated at Rs67 m.
- ii. The land requirement for the construction of the Medi clinic is about 4000 square metres. However, the present land surface area available is only 2034 square metres. Following a site visit effected on 18 April 2012 in the presence of the representatives of Ministry of Housing and Lands, Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, action is being initiated for the vesting in my Ministry of the adjacent plot of land under the responsibility of the said Ministry.

In fact, I am pleased to inform the House that the land has already been vested. There is no objection from the Ministry of MPI for the vesting of the additional land, making it 4000 square meters.

Ms Anquetil: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Being given that the closure of the Floreal Dispensary for the construction of a Medi Clinic is causing some inconveniences to all inhabitants of Floreal, particularly the senior citizens, *est-ce que le ministre serait d'accord de trouver une formule pour faciliter la prise de sang des senior citizens de la région?*

Mr Bundhoo: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member and hon. Mrs Bappoo raised the matter with me some three weeks ago and I have already made arrangements with the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and they have agreed to allow us to use on every Friday the nearest social welfare centre and I am pleased to inform the hon. Member and the House that as from next Friday, if all arrangements are being put in place, from 7.30 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. as hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee did when she was Minister, the *prise de sang* would be done in this Social Welfare Centre.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, in a previous answer given by the hon. Minister, he stated that – allow me to quote –

“Talking about the construction of the new area health centre, pending that, we will go forward for the renting of a building which satisfies all criteria.”

The Minister even added that tender was re-launched - because a tender was launched around June - to rent a building to service the inhabitants of this locality. May I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand regarding the renting of this building about the tender that was re-launched in October?

Mr Bundhoo: In fact, this is exactly what I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, at the time the question was put to me but, quite unfortunately, despite the second tender exercise there was no bidder that came forward that satisfied the criteria laid down. I am prepared, hon. Members, to give all of you a copy of the tender document, if you could use your good office as Members of Parliament ...

(Interruptions)

Let me finish! If you could use your good office as Members of Parliament to invite prospective bidders that satisfy the criteria, we will be prepared to look at it.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister the date on which the tender was launched and where was it published? For how many days this tender was published and where?

Mr Bundhoo: The tender was launched on 14 October 2011 and I can lay a copy of the tender document on the Table of the Assembly.

(Interruptions)

I don't know where it was launched, but it was a public...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, now! Answer the question!

Mr Bundhoo: I mean I am pretty sure that this has been launched and it has followed all the criteria that it should. Let me inform the hon. Member that I am prepared to lay a copy of the document on the Table of the Assembly.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister what are the criteria which have been used to decide as to whether a community health centre is required or a Medi Clinic and whether such criteria will be used in other localities as well?

Mr Bundhoo: In fact, I have to say something, why we have decided to go for a Medi Clinic in Floreal was because the two adjacent area health centres are already overloaded. By

virtue of constructing a new Medi Clinic in this area, we would be able to reorganise the services within this region.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon Minister, in his answer, took the example of the Medi Clinic of Plaine Verte, can I ask the hon. Minister why this Medi Clinic that has been completed some two years back has not yet been opened? What is the reason? Are we waiting for the Municipal elections?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that the Medi Clinic is well and ready and it will be opened soon and we are going to invite him to attend the opening ceremony whereby his party....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bundhoo: ...has done nothing in Plaine Verte.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Soodhun, what are you doing? Is this how you behave in Parliament? There is no need for you to do that from a sitting position! Yes!

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister, in view of the hardship that has been raised in the House regarding the inhabitants of this locality and now that he is going forward for the construction, what measures will he take to alleviate this? Whether he will look for another building, maybe, a Government building in the Government quarters in Floreal? Has he looked into the possibility of using part of the Government quarters in Floreal to have a dispensary?

Mr Bundhoo: No, I have to explain that. This is precisely why the previous Minister of Health, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee - and she was right. Regarding the building that was used at the time, we were advised by the MPI that it should be demolished. That is why the then Minister decided for immediate closure. I have again here to say that the adjacent building which also belongs to the MPI has also been condemned and hon. Bachoo has already instructed that his units there be displaced to somewhere else and because both units are now available, we are able to construct the new Medi Clinic which makes up altogether 4000 square metres.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir. The Minister has not replied to the second part of my question when I asked him whether the same criteria that has been used for a decision that a Medi Clinic is required in Floreal, will be used in other localities. I have in mind Black River.

Mr Bundhoo: Surely, Mr Speaker, Sir, as much as possible, this is the fourth generation of community health centres. We are proud that we are in a Government where we are now moving with Medi Clinics.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Labelle!

AUTISM – GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

(No. B/71) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to autism, she will state the support, if any, her Ministry is proposing to offer to children suffering therefrom and to their respective family.

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions (Mrs S. Bappoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this question. I wish to inform the House that my Ministry already provides support to autistic children at par with other disabled children and their families.

Autistic children below 15 years benefit from social aid and those above 15 benefit from the Basic Invalidity Pension.

Besides, these children benefit from free travel bus pass and their parents are refunded bus fare when they accompany them to schools or Day Care Centres.

My Ministry also organises regular respite care programmes for the benefit of both the autistic children and their parents.

In the context of the International Day of Autism, that is, on 02 April, the National Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (NCRD), which falls under the aegis of my Ministry, organised a number of workshops in collaboration with “*Autisme Maurice*” to raise awareness on autism and train parents on how to cope with autistic children.

The NGO Trust Fund also, which operates under the aegis of my Ministry, provided an ad hoc assistance of Rs50,000 to “*Autisme Maurice*” in January 2012 to run its Day Care Centre. “*Autisme Maurice*” may also tap ad hoc assistance from the NGO Trust Fund for any other specific projects.

On its part, the National Solidarity Fund, which also functions under the aegis of my Ministry, provides financial assistance to autistic children on a case to case basis.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I thank the hon. Minister for this answer, but I wanted to know whether there is a particular support to the families. The Minister has mentioned financial support, but this was the reason why I sent it to the Minister for Family Welfare - is the Minister aware of the suffering of the family with an autistic child and what psychological support or any other support is being given to these families?

Mrs Bappoo: I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Minister for Gender Equality is involved in a way for bringing psychological support to the parents of these children. But, the NCRD also put up workshops to train the parents. NCRD has had a resource person from UK who, in fact, is a consultant on child and adolescent psychologist and senior clinical lecturer in paediatric and child care from the University of Birmingham who is herself specialised in autism. She is a Mauritian and she has come twice to train these parents on how to bring their support as parents to their children.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In the light of what the hon. Minister has just said, does not she think that it would be appropriate to have a standing committee regrouping the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Gender Equality, her Ministry and the NGO's involved as well to see how best support can be given to the parents of these children?

Mrs Bappoo: This is a good suggestion that can be considered, Sir.

Mrs Ribot: The hon. Minister mentioned the respite centres. Can we know the number of respite centres and the number of children who can be accommodated at a time?

Mrs Bappoo: I did not say that there are respite centres, I said respite care programmes. The respite care programmes are being done at the recreational and residential centre found in Pointe Aux Sables and another one which is found in Belle Mare. But we have also other respite care programmes which are being organised with the different private enterprises, hotels, etc. There is in the pipeline a project to put up a proper respite care centre, but this needs to be finalised with all its budgetary implications.

Mr Obeegadoo: Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether there has been an estimate or an assessment of the number of autistic children in the Republic and also, will she tell the House what early detection system has been put in place to work with kindergartens, pre-primary schools and primary schools to ensure there is adequate support to such children?

Mrs Bappoo: I am informed by the Ministry of Health that actually there are some 50 registered cases in Mauritius. These are statistics available from the Ministry of Health, but there has not been any decision taken properly on whether we should set up any system with different stakeholders and Ministries to be able to identify, maybe, in pre-schools or in primary schools. But, this is something that might be considered not only by my Ministry, but in consultation with other Ministries.

Mrs Bholah: Can the hon. Minister inform the House if the Ministry envisages to carry out research on autism, given especially that this disorder is on a continuous spectrum; it might be misdiagnosed?

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, of course, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. S. Boolell: M. le président, est-ce que la ministre peut s'assurer qu'il y a une mise en place de salles spécialisées dans chaque région de l'île associées à une formation du personnel hospitalier en matière d'autisme et aussi une consultation de médecins, pédiatres et dentistes envers les autistes membres de l'association. En fait, il y a 53 membres de l'association autisme.

Mrs Bappoo: But, Mr Speaker, Sir, I suppose as far as policy is concerned, this should be taken at the level of the Ministry of Health. On the social point of view, my Ministry is ready to come forward with different accompanying measures, but as far as public health issue is concerned, I better leave it to my colleague, the Minister of Health to take up the matter.

Mrs Labelle: I think I heard the hon. Minister mentioning the figure of 50 autistic children. May I ask the hon. Minister whether this figure of 50 refers to the 50 children who are actually in some centres, and whether she is aware of the survey made by the NGOs *Autisme Maurice*?

Mrs Bappoo: I don't have at hand the findings of the survey, but when I did give the figure of 50, this is the actual official figure of registered autistic children in Mauritius from the Ministry of Health.

Mrs Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, from what we have just heard, there is a clearly a gross under estimation of the dimension of the problem in Mauritius. Can the hon. Minister tell us why - given the situation, given the international concern with autism - there has not been such a Standing Committee, as hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee just mentioned, set up? Why have

measures not been taken upon till now to allow for information of the public, of parents and early detection of such children with special needs?

Mrs Bappoo: I don't think, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I am going to set up other mechanism which will be in parallel to others, which have already been set up, as we already have the Working Together Committee at the level of the Ministry of Gender. I suppose this is an issue that can be taken at the level of that committee because in that Working Together Concept Committee, we have all the other stakeholders, and if they have to go for further studies or surveys or whatever further support to these children, I think that this committee will be most appropriate to see to it.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister when she has referred to 50, whether this figure refers to children in private schools or in Government schools because we know that we have some private centres that are taking care of autistic children?

Mrs Bappoo: In fact, as far as I am informed there is only one registered NGO, that is, *Autisme Maurice* that really takes care of autistic children. The figure 50, as I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the official figure that we got from the Ministry of Health. Now, whether these children are found in schools or in pre-schools, this needs further investigation from my Ministry.

ST JEAN ROUNDABOUT – THIRD LANE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/72) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of a third lane, heading North, on the flyover at the St. Jean roundabout, he will state -

- (a) the name of the civil engineer who has designed the infrastructural works therefor;
- (b) if it is within international norms to construct a third lane on an existing hard shoulder;
- (c) if geological studies were undertaken prior thereto and if so, table copy of the report;
- (d) if no provision for the construction of a hard shoulder adjacent to the third lane has been made and if so, the reasons therefor, and

(e) if the third lane will resist the weight of the vehicles.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker Sir, the flyover at the St. Jean roundabout consists of two bridges and road embankments. The bridge structures were designed by the structural consulting firm, Servansingh Jadav and Partners, and the road infrastructure was designed by French consulting firm BCEOM 18 years ago.

The infrastructure was originally designed to cater for three lanes traffic. However, only two lanes were constructed at that time to be consistent with the rest of motorway M1. The pavement structure of the third lane has been designed and constructed in accordance with international norms by engineers of RDA. On the embankment sections in addition to a third lane of 3.5 metres, a hard shoulder of 1.5 metres has been constructed.

As for part (c) of the question, Geological studies were carried out prior to the design. Although this dates back to more than 18 years, the Road Development Authority has been requested to trace back and retrieve the Report. For the widening of the St. Jean to Colville Deverell Bridge project, trial pits were dug to confirm the safety and reliability of the road structure.

Regarding part (d), a hard shoulder has been constructed as stated before. However a jersey barrier has been provided on it to enhance road safety. This device is internationally recognised as a safety enhancement device.

The third lane on the bridge has been designed for and is already taking traffic loads. No structural problem has been observed.

Mr Speaker: I will suspend the sitting here for lunch and we will continue with the questions after lunch.

At 12.57 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.33 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, have you got any supplementary question?

Dr. Sorefan: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I've got a few supplementary questions. The hon. vice-Prime Minister mentioned in his reply that the Geotechnical Report done 15 years ago could not be found by the RDA. May we know on what the Ministry bases itself to embark on such a major project for the third lane?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, there is a mistake which he is committing, it is not 15 years, it is 18 years. 18 years ago...

(Interruptions)

Dix-huit ans, the geotechnical surveys were conducted. And, secondly, once the surveys were conducted, the bridge was constructed. That was inaugurated in 1994 so that work has already been done, the reports were available at that time and, in addition to this, I have also mentioned that before undertaking the construction of the third lane, again the officers of my Ministry, they had done certain works. For example, trial pits were dug to confirm the safety and reliability of the road structure. That is all. You can't undertake topographical studies time and again.

Dr. Sorefan: We hope that the report will some day make surface to know the real truth. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister table the design for the St Jean flyover which was constructed in 1993 where mention was made for the provision of a third lane?

Mr Bachoo: Normally, if I am going to submit the design, I will try to find out, there won't be mention of a third lane; mention will not be there, but enough space was made available for a third lane. That is number one and secondly, as far as that document which the hon. Member is talking about, I have just mentioned that it is already about 18 years old. We have made a request, if that is available with the consultant I am going to lay a copy on the Table of the House.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to differ from what the hon. Minister said in his reply regarding the hard shoulder, because there is presently no 1.5 metre setback from the road. Could the hon. Minister table the new design of the third lane of the flyover to prove the existence of that 1.5 metre setback for the hard shoulder?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are very serious; we are talking in terms of a bridge and not a dental bridge. This is a bridge, and I can maintain that the competent officers of my Ministry, competent engineers have properly designed the third lane and I am definitely going to lay on the Table of the House the preliminary design of that third lane.

Mr Bhagwan: We are talking about the St Jean-Phoenix road also in the same breath. On many occasions, I have raised the issue of lighting which is one cause of concern from St Jean to Phoenix and the hon. Minister gave the assurance to the House while replying to many supplementary questions I have asked, that that item would be included. From what I gather, up to now, there is no work going on in the project for the inclusion of lighting system from St Jean

to Phoenix. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House where matters stand, whether work contract has been given and what would be the commencing date?

Mr Bachoo: I have already given assurance to the House that work, as far as lighting is concerned, will be on.

Mr Bhagwan: Being given that I have raised the issue on many occasions and it is a cause of concern for drivers at night, especially during winter season, and now we are in winter, can the hon. Minister at least give us a time limit, at least an indication as to whether this year or next year, whether it is within the contract which has been awarded because the last time the Minister gave us the impression that it was in the contract of the works which have been given from St Jean to Phoenix?

Mr Bachoo: I have already given instructions to the technicians of my Ministry, of RDA in particular, to look into it and I can again assure the hon. Member that I am concerned with that issue and we are going ahead with it.

The Deputy Speaker: I will kindly request hon. Members to address the Chair.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister that with the implementation of third lane all along the M1 motorway, emergency lanes have disappeared? Do we understand that we are doing away with emergency lanes on our highways?

Mr Bachoo: I have been Minister of the MPI for so many years, I have never heard about any emergency lane. We don't have, we had crawler...

(Interruptions)

I am the Minister, I know my responsibility, we had crawler lanes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we never had any emergency lane and unfortunately the road is such that you can't make any provision for emergency lanes.

Mr Obeegadoo: Being given that the hon. Minister might not be aware because I don't know when it was the last time that the hon. Minister drove his own car but ...

(Interruptions)

No, the emergency lane exists, the hon. Minister should know. Along the motorway! The hon. Minister has been Minister for many, many years,

(Interruptions)

My question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that the Prime Minister himself has expressed his dissatisfaction that motorists do not use the first lane. We now have three lanes; they do not

use the first lane for various reasons. They are not used to it, at times there is a break in the first lane. Now, in this particular case of that bridge at St Jean, even though the hon. Minister himself does not drive a car, does he realise that this lane is so sharp, narrow with this cement wall that it serves as a very powerful disincentive for motorists to take the first lane. Is the hon. Minister aware that if you look at that bridge at times of traffic, motorists use the second and third lanes, but rarely the first lane precisely because it is such a sharp bend and it is objectively dangerous. Will he at least agree to keep an open mind to have a look again, to try and drive his own car for once along that way to understand what the problem of motorists might be?

Mr Bachoo: The hon. Member is making a very big mistake. I normally drive my car, so, I have the habit of doing it. Even two or three days ago, I was on that road and personally I went to have a look at it *de visu* and I can tell you the system that we have introduced, the jersey barrier that has proved to be not a danger but only advice I have been giving to vehicle drivers that they have to be careful. Secondly, people have the habit of not using the first lane, they rather go to the third or the second lane and on that also, we have got our legislation because it is only when you are overtaking, then you can take the second or the third lane, but, most of the time, you find that people are taking the third or the second lane and very rarely they use the first one.

Another problem is that as far as the one and a half metre is concerned, it is already there and even at the Pont Colville Deverell Bridge itself, we have got only less than a metre large of the *trottoir*, the footpath. So, that is not a problem, it all depends on how you are using your car. If you are careful on the road, you won't have any problem. We have got three lanes; if we had two lanes, then the possibility of having, let us say, a lay-by would have been there, but the fact that we have got three lanes, we have ample space and you can use it properly.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether it is safe for a full load of a-40 foot container to use this lane with its present structure?

Mr Bachoo: But now it is serving its purpose. My only humble request to hon. Members is: please, don't covet your evil eyes on such things! I hope that we are not *prophète de malheur*.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Minister has now confirmed that there is no emergency lane, that is, no special lane dedicated to emergency vehicles on our highway, can I know from the hon. Minister which lane is going to be used in case there are emergency vehicles attending an accident or an emergency on the highway?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our people are very responsible in such matters. Let me openly state that we had a crawler lane only in some places, but most of the time, we had only two lanes. But, now, we have got three lanes and in case of any emergency, any danger, our people are very responsible; drivers are responsible enough to give way. We don't have any emergency lane. He was in the Government in the past and he knew this very well.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister will disagree. We can accompany him in my own car, in his own car, it's written there. We use this road everyday from Colville Deverell Bridge, the bypass to Montagne Ory to go to the South, it's written there with, I would say, road markings - emergency lane. It is there! I challenge him, he can come with me and see. It is written there - road markings by his own Ministry.

Mr Bachoo: We do not consider any lane to be emergency lane. All lanes for that matter can be considered to be emergency lanes.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Allow the hon. vice-Prime Minister to reply!

(Interruptions)

Last question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as an MP in this House, I have the right to ask questions, whether I am intellectually limited or not because certain people think they know more on infrastructure. May I inform the House...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should go straight to his question.

Dr. Sorefan: May I inform the House that I am well qualified in civil engineering to ask questions!

(Interruptions)

Can the hon. Minister inform the House why a concrete reinforced wall was not included for future safety on that road?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned that we have got hard shoulder which has already been included. We have put it up and I am satisfied with the way the work has been properly executed and I hope that all the motorists, everybody, will follow the rules of the game properly.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/81, B/95 and B/97 have been withdrawn.

MARYSE JUSTIN STADIUM - RENOVATION

(No. B/73) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the project for the renovation of the Maryse Justin Stadium, he will state if the tender procedures therefor have been launched and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) name of the contractor;
- (b) contract value thereof, and
- (c) contractual start and completion dates thereof.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the request of the Mauritius Amateur Athletics Association, patching works to the synthetic track of Maryse Justin Stadium were carried out in 2010. After tender procedures, the works were entrusted to Mr Guy Pochet for a contract value of Euro 14,465. The works which were expected to extend the useful life of the track by two years, were carried out during the month of April 2010.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, subsequently, the Association came up with another request for the replacement of the synthetic track and other upgrading works. These renovation works will be undertaken in two phases. During the first phase of the renovation project the synthetic track will be replaced. Funds amounting to Rs15 m. have been made available during the current financial year for this purpose. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping is presently carrying out a survey with a view to submitting to my Ministry the scope of work, the bill of quantities and the cost estimates. On receipt of these items of information from that Ministry, the tender exercise will be started.

During the second phase of the project, upgrading works relating to replacement of iron sheets in the call room, replacement of doors in the toilets and sanitary works will be carried out. It is estimated that these upgrading works will cost around Rs900,000 for which provision will be made in the next financial year.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, je sais que le ministre est parfaitement au courant que le mauvais état de la piste avait sérieusement perturbé la préparation de nos athlètes dans leur préparation lors des derniers Jeux des Iles. Vu que dans le budget 2012 - il vient de le dire lui-même - Rs15 m. a été *earmarked* pour la rénovation du Stade Maryse Justin, cinq mois déjà se

sont écoulés et toujours rien. Si je comprends bien sa réponse, nous sommes encore au stade des études préliminaires qui ne sont même pas commencées, je pense. Est-ce qu'il a une date limite en tête en ce qui concerne le démarrage des travaux? Cinq mois se sont écoulés!

Mr Ritoo: M. le président, il n'a jamais été question d'entraver les entraînements de nos athlètes parce que nous avons déjà, à l'île Maurice, le Stade Germain Comarmond, Anjalay Stadium, le Stade Auguste Volaire et le Stade de Rose Hill. Donc, nous avons tous ces stades-là où les athlètes - même à Rose Belle - peuvent s'entraîner. Et d'ailleurs, à ce jour on n'a pas eu de demande qu'il y a une extrême urgence de changer la piste synthétique du Stade Maryse Justin. Donc, nos athlètes s'entraînent correctement et pas plus tard que la semaine dernière, on a eu la compétition Maurice-Reunion, dans le même Stade Maryse Justin.

Mr Quirin: Ce que le ministre ne dit pas, c'est que lors de cette dernière compétition, il n'y a eu que quatre couloirs sur six qui ont été utilisés. Ce qui prouve qu'effectivement la piste est en mauvais état. Il y a deux couloirs qu'on ne peut pas utiliser. Donc, vu le nombre restreint de participants, les organisateurs ont pu quand même utiliser cette piste en question, mais quatre couloirs uniquement et non les six.

Mr Ritoo: M. le président, je crois que l'honorable membre ne comprend pas ce qui s'appelle l'entraînement. Pour l'entraînement, on n'utilise pas les huit couloirs. L'entraînement, c'est tout simplement deux ou trois compétiteurs qui essaient de courir le plus vite. C'est seulement l'entraînement.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Minister give the reply and then the Member can ask supplementary questions.

Mr Ritoo: On n'a jamais fait mention de compétition. A ce jour, la fédération n'a jamais fait une demande en bonne et due forme qu'il y a un problème de compétition. Ils s'entraînent sans problème et il y a un *earmarking* de R 15 millions pour changer la piste complètement. Donc, cela va prendre du temps. Il y a le ministère MPI qui est en train de faire le nécessaire. Donc, à ce jour, il n'y a pas de problème.

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, on voit de nouvelles voitures qui sont achetées tous les jours par ce gouvernement et on ne trouve pas de l'argent pour financer le projet du Stade Maryse Justin ! Comment expliquer ça? Et on veut maintenant promouvoir le sport dans le pays!

The Deputy Speaker: The reply has been given already. Next question! Hon. Quirin!

(Interruptions)

There is no need for any comment, hon. Jhugroo!

FOOTBALL - DIRECTEUR TECHNIQUE NATIONAL - CONTRACT

(No. B/74) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Directeur Technique National* de football, he will state the termination date of his contract, indicating if his Ministry proposes the renewal thereof and, if not, why not, indicating the official stand of the Mauritius Football Association in relation thereto.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to inform the House that my Ministry has, after consultation with the Mauritius Football Association (MFA), decided not to renew the contract of the Directeur Technique National (DTN) of football on its expiry on 30 June 2012.

The Mauritius Football Association has informed my Ministry that in view of the high salary of the DTN which is amounting to more than Rs2 m. annually and that this amount is being offset from its budget, it prefers to have a local DTN who may be afforded at lower cost.

The Mauritius Football Association has, by way of a press notice, already invited applications from Mauritian candidates who are interested to be recruited as DTN of football. The closing date for submission of application is 18 May 2012.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre peut-il nous donner la liste des réalisations du DTN et le progrès accompli au niveau de la formation, s'il y en a eu bien sûr?

Mr Ritoo: I made a reply to PQ Nos. B/137 and B/192 where I listed the list of what the National Technical Director of football has been doing and how much achievement has been achieved by the local football.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre peut-il nous préciser combien de compétitions pour jeunes ont été lancés sous la houlette du DTN?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, le DTN est responsable de la direction technique du football à l'île Maurice et a sous sa responsabilité plusieurs entraîneurs, a organisé plusieurs compétitions, que ce soit au niveau des moins de onze, treize, quinze, dix-sept ans et aussi il a collaboré au niveau du COPA Coca-Cola Cup. Ensuite, il a fait le lancement du *football for health, football at Primary School level*, le Mauritius Saturday Football League qui se joue tous

les samedis. Donc, il a une responsabilité, aussi il est responsable de la formation des cadres à l'île Maurice.

Mr Bhagwan: We are talking about football, on many occasions the hon. Minister who has been an international player a very long time ago and we were his supporters then...

The Deputy Speaker: I will request hon. Bhagwan to address the Chair.

Mr Bhagwan: I am addressing the Chair, but my eyes are on him!

The Deputy Speaker: The eyes should be here, on me!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning the way our football is being managed these days, can the hon. Minister inform the sports community what they are doing to at least put some order in the house? We have a federation where there are two heads, two chairpersons. *Deux monstres à deux têtes. Deuxièmement, rien ne va plus dans cette fédération.* I am not personally blaming the hon. Minister. But, it is public money which is being voted here in Parliament and everyday we are seeing press conferences and fighting. What is the hon. Minister contemplating in the coming future to put some order in the house, not only in the public interest, but also *dans l'intérêt des sportifs et de notre football?*

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, l'honorable membre connaît déjà très bien que nous ne sommes pas autorisés à ingérer dans les affaires internes de la fédération. Malheureusement, au niveau de la fédération mauricienne du football et dans d'autres fédérations, il y a justement des querelles internes et il y a deux présidents. Mais le problème est que je ne peux m'ingérer dans les affaires internes. En ce qui concerne le football au niveau de mon ministère, nous avons donné tous les moyens. Normalement, les gens jugent le football à travers la performance de l'équipe nationale. C'est pour cette raison que je pense rechercher l'aval de la fédération mauricienne du football pour pouvoir au moins recruter un entraîneur national au lieu d'un directeur technique national parce qu'à l'île Maurice depuis 1988, nous travaillons sous la direction des DTN français. Moi-même j'étais entraîneur et j'ai travaillé sous ces DTN-là. Après 25 ans, je peux dire, à ce jour, nous avons suffisamment des mauriciens qui ont été formés et qui ont tous fait des stages de perfectionnement à Clairefontaine. Aujourd'hui, ils peuvent prendre la responsabilité au niveau de la direction technique nationale. Mais en ce qui concerne l'équipe phare, c'est-à-dire, la sélection nationale, on souhaiterait plutôt recruter un sélectionneur étranger.

Mr Quirin : M. le président, si je comprends bien la réponse du ministre, c'est qu'il n'est pas d'accord avec la position de la MFA de recruter un DTN mauricien. C'est bien cela ?

Mr Ritoo : Sélectionneur national !

Mr Quirin : Dernière question, M. le président ! L'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire quel bilan qu'il fait du centre technique national depuis l'arrivée du DTN Desbouillon à ce jour ?

Mr Ritoo : Son contrat est renouvelé chaque année. Pendant trois ans il a été ici et il a donné des résultats parce que, comme je vous le dis, au niveau des jeunes, on a eu des résultats. Nous sommes actuellement champions de l'Océan Indien au niveau CJSOI moins dix-sept ans. Nous avons gagné la compétition de moins de treize ans à l'île de la Réunion en battant l'équipe de la Réunion justement. Au niveau des jeunes il y a eu des résultats. C'est pourquoi je vous dis qu'au niveau des jeunes nous sommes satisfaits parce que le ministère a investi et nous avons un moyen de contrôle. Mais en ce qui concerne l'équipe nationale, c'est la fédération qui décide de l'entraîneur national.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Barbier !

HARBOUR BRIDGE PROJECT

(No. B/75) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Harbour Bridge project, he will state where matters stand, giving details of the proposed changes to be brought thereto.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Harbour Bridge project will be implemented as a Public Private Partnership project. Bids from three prequalified bidders have been received by the Central Procurement Board and the bid evaluation exercise is ongoing.

A corridor has been earmarked for the project and the land acquisition process is underway. Until the completion of the bid evaluation process and the selection of the preferred bidder, it would not be proper to release further details on this exercise due to the aspects of confidentiality.

Mr Barbier: May I know from the hon. vice-Prime Minister what is the main reason for the shifting of the alignment of the project from the right hand side to the left hand side? What is the technical reason for that?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the beginning Government decided to retain the original alignment, but subject to a cost analysis to be carried out, the Technical committee analysed both alignments and submitted the recommendations to Government and Cabinet decided ultimately on the revised options, but it was decided that no compensation had to be paid to the company which was undertaking the development works, that is, Neotown. By doing so, we have been able to make an economy of about Rs 150 m. because initially it was Rs 425 m. and with the new alignment it is coming down to about Rs 275 m.

Mr Barbier: The hon. vice-Prime Minister mentioned also that it is going to be a Private Partnership Project. Am I right to say that the bidding include also the toll operation of other roads other than the Harbour Bridge?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, this is true. But for the time being let the bidding exercise be over and it is only then we will be in a position to speak further.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister the names of the three bidders and also if he has an idea of the approximate cost of the project?

Mr Bachoo: Neither do I know the name of the three bidders nor can I, at this particular moment in time, specifically state what will be the cost.

(Interruptions)

Mr Barbier: Is it also a fact that inhabitants of Roche Bois on the other side are going to be affected by the Harbour Bridge project and, if so, whether it concerns residential properties or otherwise?

Mr Bachoo: Land acquisition has already started and this matter is being looked into by the Ministry of Lands and Housing.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. vice-Prime Minister, in his reply, has just made mention of a Neotown project. But as the vice-Prime Minister of Government he must be aware what is the latest concerning this *projet fantôme* du Neotown? Where does matter stand? Is there any work which will be starting very soon? Whether the promoters are still selling the land outside?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, regarding the Roche Bois aspect, we have got the filling station that will be affected and a few other sites. As far as the Neotown is concerned, that does not form part of my Ministry and I won't be in a position to say anything on that.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since this is a mega project with enormous implications - economic, social, ecological - would it not be proper, as in any democratic country, that the hon. vice-Prime Minister should go public with all relevant details as to the objective of this project, the surveys carried out, the nature of the project, the actual path leading to the bridge, details of the bridge and where it will lead to on the embankment and provide the opportunity for the public to know where public funds are going and to air their views?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since long we have been talking about the mega projects, the project under PPP. But now, being given that the bids are being evaluated, it will not be proper for me to speak on that. Once it is over, then we can go ahead.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, please allow me to insist. The hon. vice-Prime Minister stated that there are three bidders. How does he know that there are three bidders and, at the same time, he does not know the names of the bidders?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not my habit to poke my nose in the internal affairs that concerned the CPB.

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. vice-Prime Minister just mentioned that we are going to have a Private Public Partnership for the construction of the Harbour Bridge. Do we take it from the hon. vice-Prime Minister that for the Harbour Bridge it would be a paying road and, if so, has he worked on the price mechanism for the payment?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is too premature to state about the price mechanism and, secondly, as a matter of principle as far back as 2003 it was decided that the toll system should be introduced following the Consultant Menon's report. Since that time, in 2003, the principle was there, but now let the work be over we will be in a position to know how much we have to pay.

Mr Bhagwan: Being given the project of such a big nature, the mega project, doesn't the hon. vice-Prime Minister find it necessary in the public interest for the Government itself to commission a strategic EIA to look into all the implications - environmental, social - of this project?

Mr Bachoo: The hon. Member was himself Minister of Environment and he knows as for Government project how we proceed about.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I refer the hon. vice-Prime Minister to a decision for Government itself to commission EIA and we have a case of La Prairie.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that they are going very fast. We have gone too far now and the bids are being evaluated and Government will have to take a decision. We are already late. We have to move faster than what are doing.

Mr Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: Can I ask the hon. vice Prime Minister when the procurement exercise will be completed?

Mr Bachoo: I am informed that it will probably be completed by the end of June.

Mr Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Barbier!

HARBOUR BRIDGE PROJECT - PROPERTIES - COMPULSORY ACQUISITION

(No. B/76) **Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Harbour Bridge project, he will state if the list of properties that will be compulsorily acquired has been finalised, and if so, indicate the

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- (a) number of properties concerned therewith, and
- (b) estimated cost that will be incurred for compensation and relocation of the present owners, if any.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority through the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping that so far 58 properties will be affected by the Harbour Bridge project, out of which 48 are in the region of Les Cassis and Les Salines and the remaining 10 in the region of Roche Bois.

As regards part (b) of the question, all the relevant information in respect of 40 cases at Les Cassis and Les Salines have been sent to the Director, Valuation and Real Estate Consultancy Services, Valuation Department on the advice of the RDA/MPI for the determination of the compensation payable. The estimated cost for compensation to be paid is still being awaited. The RDA/MPI is working on the remaining 18 cases.

Concerning the relocation, sites are being identified so that discussion can be held with any interested owners. Relocation costs, if any, will be worked out thereafter.

Mr Barbier: May I know from the hon. Minister what is the mechanism set for the inhabitants to be able to make any proposal for the cost of evaluation of their properties?

Dr. Kasenally: Actually, the Director of Evaluation set a sum of money and if they agree, we go ahead and the procedures are completed, if not, they can appeal against this to a Board of Assessment, which is independent and is chaired by a Magistrate and two assessors, who are not from Government.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In the same line of thought, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that very often those whose properties are compulsorily acquired, are penalised by the very fact that they do not accept the compensation, which is given to them by Government and they have to go to the Board of Assessment. The Board of Assessment takes more than five years sometimes to give its judgment and those whose properties have been acquired, are unduly penalised. Is the Minister aware of this and, if so, what does he propose to do to compensate adequately those whose properties have been acquired?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being Minister, I am very much aware of that. As a result of which my Ministry has come out with a new policy, which will have to be agreed, to be put to Cabinet that once the Valuation Department allocates a certain sum of money, if they are not agreeable, they can apply to the Board of Assessment then it takes a long time as the hon. Member is saying and if we think we should pay them the amount, which has already been assessed by the Valuation Department, pending their assessment subsequently. But there are some legal issues there and we are currently in discussion with the State Law Office to see how best we can sort out this problem which, I would agree, can be very painful to some people.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister in his reply stated that there are 10 properties in Roche Bois that are concerned with it. Can I ask the hon. Minister, if these 10 properties are of commercial, industrial or residential nature?

Dr. Kasenally: I think six of them are private land owners and the remaining two cases are both private and commercial.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister mentioned that in Cassis there will be 48 premises and we know among the 48, there are many commercial premises and he also mentioned that

sites have been identified. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he can inform the House which sites have been identified and whether they are for relocation? Will the relocation be for commercial as well as residential purposes?

Dr. Kasenally: I think this has to be discussed with the people having their commercial premises, which are going to be relocated. But I have no details. We have just got the preliminary documents and we are going to proceed with that as time goes on.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: Concerning the school Renganaden Seeneevassen, the fact now that it has been aligned most on the left, the road is going to pass through the school yard. Can the hon. Minister inform the House about the area of the yard which is going to be allocated for the project and whether the road is going to pass only a metre away from classroom? The fact is that we know now from the Minister of Education that the school is going to be reconstructed inside the same yard. So, can we have these details?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if a proper question is asked about that, I would answer it. I understand, last week, my colleague did give details about that, but if he requires more details, he can put a specific question then I can give him the exact location and the distance where the road will be running next to the nearest classroom.

Mr Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister stated a number of properties that will be compulsorily acquired. Are the owners in Roche Bois, Les Salines or Cassis aware that their properties will be compulsorily acquired?

Dr. Kasenally: Now, as far as the 48 people at les Salines is concerned, notice has been served to them and some of them have responded, but regarding the 10 in Roche Bois, no action has yet been taken. The MPI and the RDA are working on it; they will be forwarding these requests to me and they will be published in the newspaper as usual after vetting by my Ministry.

The Deputy Speaker: Subsequently, we will round off with hon. Jhugroo.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the colleague of the Minister, hon. Bachoo, telling us that his Ministry is moving at a very fast track. Can I know whether his Ministry will go at the same speed?

(Interruptions)

Dr. Kasenally: I don't think I need to refer right to this question; I depend on the speed he goes, but I can assure the House that I will be going at a fairly reasonable speed.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS – GCE “A” LEVEL

(No. B/77) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state if consideration will be given for allowing the secondary schools to run classes for the General Certificate of Education “A” Level instead of running classes for the Higher School Certificate.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, currently, State and Private grant-aided Secondary schools in Mauritius run courses for the Higher School Certificate examination conducted by the Cambridge International Examinations and the course programme is normally the same as that for the Cambridge GCE ‘A’ Level.

Private Secondary Schools are already allowed under certain circumstances to present their students for the G.C.E ‘A’ Level Certificate instead of the HSC, for the November examinations. This is obviously applicable to school-going students.

It is also of common knowledge that students may also opt to sit for the Cambridge ‘A’ Level as private candidates in November/December and June each year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2004, the Ministry of Education had introduced, as an exceptional measure, the possibility for students having failed Lower VI twice and not being able to repeat, to be promoted to Upper VI and sit for the GCE ‘A’ Level in two subjects. This measure is still ongoing.

In 2011, we have also introduced another flexible measure to allow students not eligible for any subject combination, to be promoted to Lower VI and opt for 2 ‘A’ level subjects, 2 ‘AS’ - advance, subsidiary subjects and GP.

As a matter of fact, out of some 12,000 school students sitting for November 2012 Examinations, 11,000 would take the HSC and some 1,000 would be taking the GCE ‘A’ Level.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, in the Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan (EHRSP) 2008-2020 it is highlighted that one of the key objectives is to broaden the opportunities at the end of secondary schooling through the inclusion of alternative modes of assessment as those provided by such Examining Boards as the IGCSE, International Baccalaureate and the GCE to respond to the diverse needs of students.

Hence, in the context of the Education Reforms enunciated in the strategic plan, discussions have already been held between my Ministry and the MES about the introduction of a more flexible policy to allow students to sit for GCE 'A' Level Examinations and the implications are being looked into. It is envisaged, as per our Implementation Plan that, by 2015, such measure would have been finalised.

However, it should be remembered that currently and in line with the Education Act, candidates are eligible to compete for the Laureate Scheme only if they sit for the HSC and not for 'A' levels.

Mrs Ribot: I am happy to hear the hon. Minister saying that the Ministry is seriously envisaging to introduce the 2A levels instead of the full HSC, because it is a secret to no one that it is very difficult for a few students to get three subjects to do at main level and one at sub. The bare fact is that they find themselves in such a situation that they have recourse to any subject.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, please!

Mrs Ribot: My question, therefore, is: when the Minister says that in certain exceptional circumstances some schools are allowed to run A level classes, whether the Ministry cannot see to it seriously that there are no abuses because certain managers force upon the students to have recourse to A level instead of full HSC for the only reason that their percentage does not drop.

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, this should be looked into.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, a system which is there because of the Laureate Scheme surely is adapted only for a minority and does a disservice to the majority. Being given that this system of HSC, as we know it, has been there, Sir, ever since you and I were at school, being given that this system has long ago been abandoned by the UK and most Commonwealth countries, is it not high time that, without waiting for 2015, we should urgently provide for flexibility to students so that each student can progress according to his abilities and according to his interest right now?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, this is, in fact, what we are doing. We are giving flexibility and I think we are going to come faster in the months to come because the research work and the surveys have already been conducted.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to add to what my colleague said and make a request to the hon. Minister the more so since even a local medical school under the aegis of the Ministry of Tertiary Education asked for 2A level for a medical school.

Dr. Bunwaree: In fact, I am aware of that and this is the reason why we are going in that direction.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question hon. Mrs Ribot!

PRIMARY SCHOOLS - ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMMES

(No. B/78) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Enhancement Programmes in the primary schools, he will state –

- (a) the number of students enrolled therefor at the beginning of each year for 2010 and 2011 respectively, indicating the number thereof who were attending same at the end of each year, and
- (b) if changes have been brought thereto for the year 2012.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, in a written reply of 08 November 2011 to PQ A/329, it was highlighted that an average of about 70% of students of both Stds III and IV and above 80% of students for Asian/Arabic languages at Std. III and Std IV level were attending the Enhancement Programme in 2011.

As regards part (a) of the question, in February 2010, 12,428 Std IV pupils enrolled in Enhancement Programme and in October same year 10,161 were still enrolled.

In February 2011, 23,494 pupils of Std III & IV were enrolled and in October the same year the number following Enhancement Programme was 17,098.

As pointed out earlier, a big majority of pupils has been participating in the Enhancement Programme. Nonetheless, efforts are being sustained to keep parents informed of the importance of the programme. In this regard, a '*lettre aux parents*' has been issued informing them of the benefits of the programme, its new orientation and the linkage of the Enhancement Programme with the review of the CPE.

As regards part (b), in view of experience gained over the implementation of the programme and with a view to rendering the Enhancement Programme more effective, a number of measures has been taken as follows -

- (i) Differentiated pedagogy is being sustained and under the Co & Extra Curricular component, the focus is on the unleashing of hidden potential and talent of the pupils so as to develop their creativity, personality and leadership. Through the Enhancement Programme, Music along with

other activities, namely SLAM, poetry, dance and art are being given a new boost.

- (ii) This year, arrangements are being made for pupils to be provided with a Portfolio for Core Subjects & Co & Extra Curriculum Activities where they will be requested to keep the assignments carried out during the Enhancement Programme for revision and follow-up purposes and this would also be used as a means of assessing their progress.
- (iii) Workbooks for Co & Extra Curricular activities are introduced in Stds III and IV in Enhancement Programme Classes this year and these are currently being finalised.
- (iv) Competitions which are organised for core subjects will also be extended to Asian/Arabic Languages at Zonal Level and National Level.
- (v) Greater sensitisation will be carried out with the support of Teachers and Headmasters on the benefits and importance of the Enhancement Programme. Certificates of attendance will be awarded and more competitions would be organised.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, according to the Minister's reply, we see that only last year, in 2011, of the 23,000 students who started the enhancement programme at the beginning of the year, 6,000 dropped out during the year. Has there been a study carried out to find out the reasons thereof?

Dr. Bunwaree: They didn't drop out from the beginning. They were enrolled in the beginning but little by little - because the question was asked for the figures at the end of the year. Of course, at the end of the year there is the examination pressure coming; there are competitions also which start in the third term and, therefore, this explains why the figures are like that. When we see the graph, it is, in fact, more or less stable for the first four months and then it drops for about 2% or 3% for the next four months and then, at the end of the year, it comes to that level which has been mentioned by the hon. Member. There is an assessment being carried out presently by the MIE and it is being done independently. I have asked for that and we are going to have the results of these assessments by the month of July this year.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to the figures the hon. Minister has just given, there is an increase in the number of pupils attending the Enhancement Programme. May

I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been an increase in the personnel, whether there has been additional recruitment and, if so, in which fields there have been recruitment to support the Enhancement Programme?

Dr. Bunwaree: I think the hon. Member has mixed up or is not aware – probably I could have given the reasons. In 2010, only Std IV students/pupils were going for an Enhancement Programme; then we added Std III. This is what explains the bigger number that is found. Now, when we have enrolled other pupils, we have, of course, increased the number of teachers, the number of resource persons which has almost doubled.

The Deputy Speaker: A last question, hon. Mrs Ribot!

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to our information, there is an acute lack of resource persons in primary schools, for example, music teachers and the sad fact is that teachers seize that opportunity to go on with curricular activities and some even have gone back to give homework to those students. Would the Minister kindly look into the matter?

Dr. Bunwaree: Well, we will never be satisfied with the number of teachers and resource persons, but I must say that, in 2011, we had 982 educators and 582 resource persons for the Enhancement Programme. In 2012, the number of educators is 1,021 and the number of resource persons, 564. Of course, we would like to have more and I do agree that we have some difficulties in certain subjects, but we are trying to manage with what we have for the time being. By the time we get more educators for even *les épreuves physiques et sportives*, that is, EPS or for music or for other subjects as well, yet we are fairly satisfied that with the limited resources, we are doing a good job.

The Deputy Speaker: Do me a favour to express your question in a straightforward manner!

Mr Obeegadoo: I have one question, Sir. Being given that the Minister had committed before this House that there would be a totally independent evaluation of this Enhancement Programme and he knows full well that the MIE will never dare criticise the Minister and his pet project, will he tell the House why it is that he cannot or will not commission a truly independent external, to the Ministry, evaluation of this Programme?

Dr. Bunwaree: I did explain at the same time that for assessment to be conducted for Enhancement Programme, we need to give time to the programme, we had just started. I said, in a first instance, we will have an assessment which would be independent, but from our own

people and *dans un deuxième temps*, we would come with another assessment. We have tapped the resources of foreign institutions, but this would be coming. For the time being, let us wait for this first assessment from the MIE.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can the hon. Minister indicate how much this project has cost the exchequer so far since its inception?

Dr. Bunwaree: We have to see what it has given as results also.

**UNESCO INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE LIST - *SEGA* AND *KREOL*
LANGUAGE - INSCRIPTION**

(No. B/79) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the inscription made by the National Heritage Trust Fund to safeguard the *sega* and the *Kreol* language as Intangible Cultural Heritage, he will state –

- (a) if the prescribed procedures were followed;
- (b) the names of the other institutions, organisation and individuals who were involved therein;
- (c) if other stakeholders and the general public were consulted in relation thereto;
- (d) if any item of Intangible Cultural Heritage was sent to the UNESCO for approval and, any comments received therefrom, and
- (e) the measures that are being taken, if any, for items in relation thereto to be inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no submission has been made by the National Heritage Fund to UNESCO for the nomination of an element of our intangible cultural heritage on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage for Humanity. Therefore, parts (a) and (d) of the question do not arise.

Regarding parts (b), (c) and (e) of the question, Government has approved that we prepare nomination dossiers for the inscription of the Sega Typique, Séga Tambour of Rodrigues, Séga Chagos and the Bhojpuri Folk song and Folk dance on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage for Humanity. Since last year, the National Heritage Fund and my Ministry have had consultations with other Ministries and parastatal bodies and a wide cross-section of the population including NGOs, artists, individuals and resource persons to that effect. The first task has been the preparation of a national inventory of

Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mauritius which is a pre-requisite for submission of elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage for inscription of the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage for Humanity of UNESCO. Secondly, a draft Nomination Dossier has been worked out for the four elements.

However, in the meantime, at the meeting of the 6th Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage held in November 2011 in Indonesia, it was recommended, *inter alia*, to revise the modalities of the examination and the maximum of Nomination Dossiers to be treated annually by the Committee. These recommendations will be considered by the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage to be held in June this year.

Consequently, in view of possible changes that might occur in June 2012, we have preferred to await same before finalising our dossiers and to send them to UNESCO before the next deadline of March 2013.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware that, since he is talking about the preparation of the dossier, the Maloya of Reunion Island is inscribed on UNESCO ICH list since 2009 and the Samba of Bahia Brazil since 2008? Has the Ministry approached these two countries, Reunion in particular, for obvious reasons of shared historical and cultural links for advice on the preparation of the Mauritian dossier?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our dossier is being prepared by professionals and all stakeholders of Mauritius have been consulted. However, if need be, because we still have time, we have to consult some other parties, we have no problem there. But it is good that I inform the House that our colonial French occupation, that has already been inscribed by UNESCO as from early 2000.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister how frequently these meetings with stakeholders were held, if there were any experts among them, including the University of Mauritius?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a long list of stakeholders, 34 institutions and 56 individuals. I can table that list.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if there has been any study, since we are talking about the *sega typique* amongst others, carried out to assess the *sega* in Mauritius by institutions, namely like Le Morne Trust Fund Heritage and Nelson

Mandela Centre and has his Ministry approached these two institutions for the input in the preparation of the Mauritian dossier ?

Mr Choonee: Yes, but they are part of the committee, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question!

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister enlighten the House on what steps are being taken in view of preparing a fresh submission for the inscription of the Mauritian ICH on UNESCO Heritage list?

Mr Choonee: I believe I have enlightened already, but we have so many sub-committees sitting, they are still working on it as we have time up March 2013.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the Minister answer.

Mr Choonee: So, before that everything will be done and all stakeholders will be taken into account, we'll get their views and work out.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to insist on that. I know there is a committee of artists supporting this inscription of Mauritian ICH on UNESCO Heritage list. I would like to have the names of these artists and the committee and who is chairing the committee and also if he is proposing to include scientific researchers or scholars among other technical support he is providing.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the whole list and the hon. Member will find out who are the experts and who are not.

MAURITIUS & INDIA - DOUBLE TAXATION AND AVOIDANCE TREATY

(No. B/80) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Double Taxation and Avoidance Treaty between Mauritius and India, he will state if –

- (a) it is being renegotiated, and
- (b) any study has been carried out to assess the impact of a change therein and of the Indian direct tax code on our economy.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that since August 2006, a Joint Working Group comprising senior officials from the

relevant authorities of our two countries was set up to consider concerns raised by the Indian Authorities in relation to the implementation of the Mauritius-India Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty. It is in this context that the provisions of the India Mauritius DTA Treaty are being looked into.

At the last meeting of the Joint Working Group, held in December 2011, the Indian side has proposed changes to certain articles of the Treaty to address the concerns expressed by them. We are willing, as part of an all-inclusive package, to consider changes to the Treaty that would address the Indian concerns, while ensuring that the economic interests of Mauritius are safeguarded. We have therefore made some concrete proposals to the Indian Authorities and we are awaiting their response. We are hopeful that a win-win package may be concluded. Due to the sensitive nature of these negotiations and the fact that it is of major interest for political parties and press in India I ask that hon. Members understand the need to maintain confidentiality in the interest of our country.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I wish to inform the House that we are working closely with the private sector to assess the impact of any possible changes to the Treaty as well as the implementation of the GAAR, upon the guidelines being finalised.

Concerning the proposed India Direct Taxes Code (DTC) which was first released on 13 August 2009 for public comments, it is not clear what would be the final provisions adopted by the Indian Parliament. However, the issue is also being taken up in the Joint Working Group (JWG).

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 04 May 2012, Shri Palani Manickam, Minister of State for Finance in the Lok Sabha stated - and I am going to table a copy - that in respect to the negotiation with Mauritius, and I quote –

“There was unwillingness on the part of Mauritius to cooperate in addressing this problem.”

Following this statement that has been given by a Minister of India, may I know from the hon. vice-Prime Minister whether Government had made any official protest to the tone and tenor of a language used in answering a PQ in India?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, indeed the matter was taken up by the Minister of Foreign Affairs with the High Commissioner of India. But I must also say that the hon. Member would have noticed that the sentence is in the past tense. There ‘was’ unwillingness. In fact, Mr

Deputy Speaker, Sir, since I came to office, as you know, we requested a meeting of the Joint Working Group, it met in December. The Prime Minister himself met the Prime Minister of India and the Minister of Finance of India in February. From that point on, we submitted proposals to them. So, the ball is no longer in the court of the Mauritian Government. However, I met the Minister of Finance, Mr Mukherjee, in Washington, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and all along at the meeting with Mr Mukherjee and before then, we have requested for an early meeting of the Joint Working Group. In fact, I don't know if the hon. Member is aware, this morning itself in Indian Parliament a question was answered where, in fact, the Indian Minister stated that a mutually acceptable date is being found.

Mr Uteem: The hon. vice-Prime Minister just mentioned the joint statement made following the visit of our Prime Minister in India and I quote one of the paragraphs from this statement –

“Both sides agreed to continue discussion at an early date with a view to reaching a mutually agreeable outcome.”

Then two months later, Lok Sabha passed a legislation, the General Anti-Avoidance Rule, which is anything but mutually agreeable to this country. So, may I know from the hon. vice-Prime Minister whether he agrees that this is an illustration of the blatant failure of our so-called economic diplomacy?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it's when I took office that economic diplomacy started. Before then, on two occasions when my predecessor ...

(Interruptions)

Listen to the answer, for God's sake! Why are they scared of the answer! Listen to the answer! Don't be scared of the answer!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the Minister reply!

Mr Duval: When my predecessor was there, on two occasions, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he went to the World Bank, he never even talked to Mr Mukherjee. Never! Never was anything done in anyway at all!

(Interruptions)

Why are they scared of the answer!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, let the hon. Minister reply! Let the hon. Minister reply, please!

Mr Duval: I know that the truth will hurt, but they have to accept the truth. The direct tax code - the question is coming later – was revised in August 2010. From August 2010 till I took over, nothing was done. There is nothing in the file.

(Interruptions)

Le dossier est vierge, M. le président ! Since that time, we have done a lot, but you must understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the GAAR also is a domestic legislation of the Indian Parliament. We have done everything we could - not only in the press - and we will leave no stone unturned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we congratulate the vice-Prime Minister for initiating this new economic diplomacy in his name. In that spirit, may I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to inform the House how many cases of round tripping of illicit funds have been carried out through Mauritian post box companies which is an accusation that has always been levelled against Mauritius both in the Indian Parliament and in the Indian public and if he could also tell us, in all those cases, whether the cases had been proven?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as I am aware, there are no proven cases. If the hon. Member asks a specific question, I will provide all the information but, as far as I know, there are no proven cases and whatever information the Indian Tax Authorities have asked, we have replied promptly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition has got a supplementary question!

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I listened carefully, but I could not hear exactly what the hon. Minister said. If he can repeat, he said: this very morning a statement was made, I understand, in India. Can we have the exact wording what the hon. Minister said?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I said that this very morning a statement was made in the Indian Parliament and I will submit the information for the Leader of the Opposition where, in fact, it is mentioning that a mutually acceptable date will be found.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem, last question!

Mr Uteem: I don't agree with the Minister of Finance that it is only since 2010 that this Government did nothing. In fact, if we look at reports in India, ever since 2005, systematically we have been attacked. Will the hon. vice-Prime Minister agree that there is an image problem with Mauritius and that this image problem is not suffered by Singapore and there are lots of companies now who are preferring to be based in Singapore than Mauritius because in Mauritius, we are unable to project a clean image which Singapore can?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would agree, but I would also agree that Mauritius is part of a political game happening in India. That is also happening. But I am saying, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I took office, I did the maximum, gave instructions to the Board of Investment, organised meetings, and the Prime Minister went. You may have seen, we have given interviews in Wall Street Journal, in the "Financial Times", in "The Economist". We have talked in about a dozen Indian newspapers. We are doing our best, but the situation was allowed to rot under my predecessor.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let hon. Jugnauth ask his question, please!

Mr Jugnauth: I am sure the hon. vice-Prime Minister will agree that we should seize every opportunity to engage the Indian Government and the authorities on this issue. Will the hon. vice-Prime Minister agree that during the last visit of the hon. Prime Minister, that was an opportunity for him also to be part of the delegation so that he could engage the Indian Authorities on that issue? Was it not a missed opportunity?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the Minister reply!

Mr Duval: I have the highest respect for the Prime Minister. In fact, when hon. Jugnauth was with us, everyday he was singing praises of the Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have the highest respect for the Prime Minister and he is more than capable of defending the case with the Prime Minister there and with the Minister of Finance. On the contrary, I don't know why Mr Mukherjee refused to meet hon. Jugnauth. But Mr

Mukherjee was very happy to meet me for half an hour and we talked and a lot of things were discussed which were very positive.

INCINERATORS - TENDER

(No. B/81) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the launching of a tender for the design, manufacture and installation of incinerators and the construction of buildings to house the incinerators, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

BAIE DU TOMBEAU SEWERAGE PROJECT – FACT FINDING COMMITTEE

(No. B/82) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Tombeau Bay Sewerage Project, he will state where matters stand as to the Fact Finding Committee set up to inquire into the overpayments effected in connection therewith, indicating if the circumstances in which the overpayments were effected for the additional works have been established.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I refer the hon. Member to the replies of PQ B/448 and B/734 of 2011. I would, at the very outset, wish to inform the House that there has been no overpayment, *per se*, under the Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project, but payments for additional works. In fact, as I previously informed the House, every cent spent on the project has been duly accounted for.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have previously informed the House, the Fact Finding Committee submitted its report to the Board of the Wastewater Management Authority on 14 July 2011. From the report, it transpires that additional works were entrusted to the contractor by the WMA without prior approval of the WMA Board, the parent Ministry and CPB resulting in the contract amount being exceeded by some 62%. The Fact Finding Committee has established that there has been a serious lack of supervision and administrative control on this project.

Based on legal advice obtained, a severe written warning was issued to two officers and, in order to prevent a recurrence of such a situation, the WMA Board has taken the following steps –

- (i) a Project Monitoring Committee has been set up at the level of the Board to monitor the implementation of all projects;

- (ii) topographical surveys are now carried out to define the scope of work with greater accuracy with a view to limiting the scope of variation orders during execution of the works, and
- (iii) the Project Management team has been reinforced with the recruitment of a Senior Project Manager/Claims Specialist with extensive international experience. The Claims Specialist, Mr Baker is in post since the beginning of April.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the said report confirms that an amount of Rs150 m. has been paid as additional works in breach of the provisions of the Public Procurement Act?

The Deputy Prime Minister: This is the whole issue, that a sum of Rs166 m. has been already spent outside the CPB, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House who gave the instruction for the additional works?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it was the engineer and the project manager.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he finds it normal that in such a case where there has been breach of the law, those two officers have just been given a severe warning?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the responsibility is shared beyond these two; unfortunately, there are others who left before the Fact Finding Committee gave its report.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister table a copy of the findings of the Committee to this House?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will ask the Board and certainly I will try.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister say whether it is the Fact Finding Committee which recommended that only a severe written warning be given ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: ...or is it another disciplinary committee?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It was after legal advice was sought.

Mr Lesjongard: May I know from the Deputy Prime Minister who gave the recommendation for just a severe warning to those officers?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have already replied to that, it is part of the Fact Finding Committee, but also of legal advice which has been sought - both.

Mr Uteem: Given the very seriousness of this issue where public funds have been lost and only warnings given, would the hon. Deputy Prime Minister be prepared to lay before the Table of this Assembly a copy of this Fact Finding Committee and of the advice received from Counsel to give only a warning because this is a very serious issue?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not think the hon. Member followed the reply that I gave. There has been no money lost. Money has been spent and accounted for. I replied to this, every cent has been accounted for. The real problem has been the line of communication.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Does not the hon. Deputy Prime Minister think that this case should be referred to the ICAC?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Well, I do not see any need for it. As I have said, we have obtained legal advice. We have looked at the Central Procurement Board. We have gone through all the proceedings. There has been no money that has been spent without being accounted for. No money.

Mr Baloomoody: Just to follow up the question of my friend hon. Uteem, is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister prepared to lay at the Table a copy of the report?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have already replied to that.

Mr Soodhun: Can I ask whether the hon. Deputy Prime Minister can inform the House whether the Prime Minister was personally involved in the decision taking for this project?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order, please. Hon Soodhun, order, please! Order, order please! Order please! Hon. Soodhun, order please! Please, do not provoke the Member! Please, this is enough. Yes, hon. Deputy Prime Minister. It is enough, hon. Soodhun! It is enough.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, do I need to reply to this question? The question does not even arise. How can the Prime Minister get involved with this? This is a matter for the WMA Board.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: It is enough, no remarks from a sitting position hon. Soodhun! Last question, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the Deputy Prime Minister confirm to the House whether the Chairperson of the Fact Finding Committee is now the General Manager of the Wastewater Authority and is also the Chairperson of the IRP at the Procurement Board?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, I confirm that.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Nagalingum!

MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS – RESIGNED/LOSS OF SEATS

(No. B/83) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the municipal councillors, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the councils, information as to the number thereof who have resigned or lost their seats, since October 2005 to date.

The Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr S. Dayal): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that thirty-five Municipal Councillors have resigned or lost their seats since October 2005 to date.

Mr Nagalingum: Can the hon. Minister give us the names of councillors, the respective Councils from where they resigned and the date of the resignation?

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will gladly table all the information because there were 35 councillors who have resigned or lost their seats.

Mr Nagalingum: On how many occasions has there been a lack of quorum of Council meeting and in which Municipality?

Mr Dayal: I will request the hon. Member to come with a substantive question.

Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether his office is contemplating to have replacement elections or to go directly to municipal elections?

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, again, I should like to request the hon. Member to come with a substantive question to the substantive issue.

Mr Bhagwan: Since the councillors are being remunerated nearly Rs8,000 monthly or more, is the Minister aware or can he check with his colleague that there are several councillors who are on the list of elected councilors, but who are not in Mauritius and are cashing this money illegally?

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have taken note of the request of the hon. Member and I will definitely pass on the information to the hon. Minister.

HOTELS – APAVOU GROUP – SANCTIONS

(No. B/84) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the hotels belonging to the Apavou Group, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to if it has issued any warning and/or imposed any sanction against same, and if so, indicate;

(a) the nature thereof, and

(b) if the taxi drivers and the hawkers working within the premises thereof have submitted representations thereto in connection therewith.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that three hotels, holding a valid Tourist Enterprise Licence issued by the Tourism Authority, are currently being operated by the Apavou Group, namely, Indian Club Apavou Hotel and Le Mornea situated at Le Morne and La Plantation Hotel located at Balaclava.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Tourism Authority that since 2008 to date, the Indian Club Apavou Hotel as well as La Plantation Hotel have, following inspections carried out by officers of the Tourism Authority, been subjected to some fourteen contraventions, improvement notices, warnings and sanctions for non-compliance with the sanitary and hygienic standards prescribed by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, under the Food Act and with the guidelines, standards and requirements applicable under the Tourism Authority Act.

It may be noted that these sanctions include –

- (i) the suspension of the Tourist Enterprise Licence of the Indian Club Apavou Hotel on two occasions for reasons of major operational shortcomings; the

first time for a period of five days in March 2010 and as from 31 March 2012, for a period of three months, and

- (ii) notice for the cessation of operations in October 2011, of Le Mornea Hotel as well as the restaurant Mikado, which were both operating without a license, in breach of the provisions of the Tourism Authority Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Tourism Authority that no representations emanating from the taxi drivers working at any of the hotels operated by the Apavou Group, has been recorded thereat. Representations have, however, been received from the beach hawkers trading in front of Indian Club Apavou Hotel, in the wake of a recent suspension of a license of that hotel, following which they have temporarily been redeployed to the hotels in the region.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Minister really want us to believe that he is not aware that in the case of the Indian Resort hotel there are some 30 taxi drivers who are technically unemployed, without any means of earning their living for some six weeks now and that there have been many representations made through their MPs to the NTA, to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure concerning the necessary redeployment, pending the re-opening of that hotel?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, the exact number is 26. I am aware that the hon. Member has contacted me for these taxis, but I was answering on behalf of the Tourism Authority.

Mr Obeegadoo: In this particular case, may we have some indications as to what measures that his Ministry is piloting together with other concerned Ministries, so that these heads of families can hope pending the re-opening of Indian Resort hotel?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that they should have contacted the relevant authority, which is the NTA.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Li Kwong Wing!

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN COUNTRIES/MAURITIUS - DOUBLE TAXATION

TREATY

(No. B/85) **Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to double taxation, he will, for the period 2005 to-date, state the Sub-Saharan African countries -

- (a) with which Mauritius has ratified treaties in relation thereto;
 - (i) indicating the number of missions carried out by the officers of his Ministry thereat, and
 - (ii) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to the number of missions carried out by the officers thereof thereat, for the promotion of investments therein, through Mauritius, and
- (b) which have set up their own financial centres.

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: I understood that the Chair announced that it had been removed, but I am happy to respond to it.

(Interruptions)

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the House may wish to note that out of the 54 African countries, Mauritius has identified a priority list of 30 countries with which a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) is envisaged.

As at date, Mauritius has signed 16 DTAAAs with countries from that group, the latest one being with Kenya last week. Thirteen of these agreements have already been ratified and are in force. Kenya, Congo Brazzaville and Zambia await ratification. I wish to inform the House that the process for concluding successfully such agreement is quite lengthy. We are following up, through diplomatic channels, for these countries to complete their corresponding internal procedures. During the period 2005 to date, we have initiated negotiations with eight African countries, namely, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Congo Brazzaville, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania and renegotiated the DTA with South Africa.

In this respect, last week the Minister of Finance of Kenya visited Mauritius at my invitation and we proceeded to sign the DTAA between our two countries. Moreover, DTAAAs have also been signed with Congo Brazzaville, Seychelles and Zambia during the concerned period and the one with Seychelles has been ratified.

I am tabling full details thereof.

Regarding DTAA negotiations, my Ministry considers that it is more practical and efficient to invite delegations from the relevant countries to hold discussions in Mauritius.

However, often a second or even a third round of negotiation is necessary. In those cases the officers of my Ministry have to proceed to the relevant country to complete the discussions.

For the period 2005 to date, delegations from seven African countries visited Mauritius while officers of my Ministry undertook three foreign missions in that region, namely to Egypt, Ghana and South Africa.

With regard to part (a) (ii), the Board of Investment (BOI) has, on its part, been actively promoting Mauritius as an investment platform for African countries. To this end, the BOI has undertaken nine missions in Africa of which six since I took office in 2011. Countries where BOI had led missions to this end are namely South Africa, Botswana, Madagascar and Congo Brazzaville. In all these missions, significant interests have been received on the use of the Mauritian platform for Africa, which the BOI is following on.

I have led two investment promotion missions with BOI to the USA and Europe, in view of promoting Mauritius as a platform for Africa.

Concerning part (b) of the question, since 2005 financial centres have been set up in four Sub-Saharan African countries namely Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. While it is conceded that the hon. vice-Prime Minister has suddenly shaken up the Government on its African strategy, does the hon. vice-Prime Minister not agree that a double taxation treaty cannot enter into operation until it is ratified? Can the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform the House why is it that after seven years in Government, not a single treaty has been ratified with any country in sub-Saharan Africa, although Mauritius has been Chairman of SADC and COMESA for some time?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I agree with the hon. Member. Probably, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Africa, at that time, was not so high on the agenda and I don't want to blame anyone again. I will play that game later. The fact remains, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we are really pushing forward and Kenya has promised that they will ratify within a month of signature.

Minister Ngozi is coming in July with a delegation and the point of her visit to Mauritius is to sign the DTAA and the IPPA, which is as important, and I am sure that the hon. Member will agree. And, so we are moving forward Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: That's why I congratulated the hon. vice-Prime Minister for taking the paternity of the new economic diplomacy from the Prime Minister since he has taken the new office. Unfortunately, does he not agree that he is working at cross purposes with the Prime

Minister's Office because the Prime Minister's Office is responsible for national airline and air access policy, and yet an Africa strategy cannot hold water unless we have air connectivity with Africa? We have seen Air Mauritius curtailing flight to South Africa and the flight to Kenya is erratic and, at the same time, the businessmen are disrupted in their supply chain in using Mauritius. So how can our Africa strategy hold water in the face of the disruptions of the Prime Minister's Office?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member will never disrupt my relations with the Prime Minister, that is for sure. In fact, the need to improve our connectivity to the region was mentioned in our last year's Budget which, as you know, is approved by the Prime Minister before it is read. So, there is no discrepancy in that. The only question, of course, is how to put it in practice. It is a chicken and egg situation. You need the passengers before we have the airlines and we need the airlines to get the passengers. What we are trying to do is to make Mauritius a hub with direct flights coming from China etc. It is difficult, it is a real problem and we have to work on it because the question of connectivity is essential to the ambition of Mauritius to be a regional hub for the region.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: As to the disruption from the Prime Minister's Office, can the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform the House why Government - through the BOI and its Chairman - is playing in the hands of Singapore in a so-called triangular cooperation with Africa when Singapore is a rival to Mauritius in the India business and also in the African business? And it has been merrily bypassing Mauritius and signing double taxation treaties directly with the same African countries with whom we want to sign double taxation treaties and has even used the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, which is helping Mauritius on water management and MTPA, to implement through MoUs with Rwanda for an ICT hub, with Congo for a logistic hub and with Kenya for air traffic hub. So, is it not working at cross purposes with the Prime Minister's Office which is playing in the hands of Africa when Singapore is negotiating a free trade area with the East African community?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a very united Government. We are all looking in the same direction. I think there is no argument, whether it is in Government, I hope not in the Opposition and not in the population at large, that Africa today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, represents tremendous opportunities and Mauritius is very fortunate to be at the doorstep of Africa. This is a fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Now, the question of Singapore and Congo,

obviously, Mauritius, if it is asked to help, should help to try to develop and make our friends in Congo more prosperous. This is a right thing. There are many countries which are trying to compete with Mauritius as a route to investment into Africa.

We must compete, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We are not living in a vacuum and the message to everybody is that we must get up and compete and be the best.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what we are saying is that Singapore is undermining Mauritius as in the case of our India treaty, they are a severe competitor to Mauritius, they are undermining us; the Prime Minister's Office with BOI and its Chairman are doing the same thing and in the Committee for International Advisory Council it is the same Singapore gang that is undermining us and bypassing Mauritius. So, we are asking whether the Minister is aware.

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Singapore as long as it is using fair means is allowed to compete with Mauritius and Mauritius is allowed to compete with Singapore.

ST GERAN HOTEL – EMPLOYEES - COMPLAINT

(No. B/86) **Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the St Geran Hotel, he will state if he has received a complaint from the representatives of the employees thereof against their employer during the month of April 2012, and if so, indicate the

-

(a) exact date thereof, and

(b) actions taken by his Ministry in relation thereto.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a letter signed by some 30 persons dated 06 April 2012 was received at my Ministry on 09 April 2012. In the letter, the signatories averred that they were working at St Geran Hotel and are being subjected to insult and verbal abuse by their head, the *Chef de Cuisine*.

I am informed that an enquiry was carried out at St Geran Hotel by a Senior Officer of my Ministry on 03 and 10 May 2012 to investigate into the complaint. On 03 May, all workers working in the kitchen at that time were met individually and were confronted with the contents

of the letter received which was sent on 06 April 2012. They denied the allegations of verbal abuse and ill-treatment by the *Chef de Cuisine* and did not voice out any complaint.

More worryingly during the enquiry on 10 May 2012, some workers who allegedly had signed the letter dated 06 April 2012 working in the kitchen, denied having signed same. They went further to say that they had no objection that this matter be referred to the CID for enquiry. This matter has since then been referred to the Commissioner of Police for enquiry since this whole letter dated 06 April 2012 is tainted with forgery.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Labour is supposed to be the mediation Ministry between the employer and employees. We heard a lot about *ce qui est légal n'est pas nécessairement moral*. Does the hon. Minister think that it is ethical for him as the Minister of Labour, a few days after having receiving a complaint from the employees of this hotel, to go there for dinner ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: These two issues are not linked. This is my ruling.

Mr Seeruttun: My question is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir: did the hon. Minister pay a visit to the hotel a few days after receiving.....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I have said that these two issues are not linked.

Mr Seeruttun: Did the hon. Minister pay a visit ...

The Deputy Speaker: I have given my ruling; these two issues are not linked.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just to inform the House and to enlighten the House on something which, maybe, Members are not aware is that, when the letter was sent to my Ministry on the date of 06 April and when it was referred to the Director of Labour and Industrial Relations for enquiry, I was not in Mauritius and I never was in Mauritius when this letter was sent to the Ministry. So, that is an answer which I would like to give to the hon. Member. Maybe now, he is going to think twice about making allegations in such a cowardly manner.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/93 and No. B/98 have been withdrawn.

(Interruptions)

Time is over!

(Interruptions)

Time is over! Hon. vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, your note of personal explanation!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

BOIS DE ROSE – SHIPMENT - SEIZURE

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance (Mr X.L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker,

....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: It is over we are to the next stage now. Let us listen to the note of explanation from the vice-Prime Minister.

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my name was mentioned by hon. P. Jugnauth during PQ No. B/48. In June 2011, ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed! Let us listen to the note of explanation by the vice-Prime Minister!

Mr Duval: In June 2011, when I was still at the Ministry of Social Integration, I received a phone call from the then Prime Minister of Madagascar concerning an alleged shipment of rosewood which was to transit through Port Louis. He gave me the identification number of the container for its interception. Immediately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I called the Director of the MRA to inform him of same.

Later on, on the same day, the Director of the MRA called me and informed me that not one but six containers had been seized. Some time later when I was still at the Ministry of Social Integration, I received a request from the then Prime Minister of Madagascar asking for support for the restitution of the said containers to the Government of Madagascar in view of its very high value. The House would note that request for restitution was made formally by the Ministry of Environment of Madagascar through our Embassy in Madagascar on 22 June 2011.

The hon. Attorney General is in presence of a request dated 02 August 2011 from the Ministry of Justice of Madagascar for assistance in respect of criminal investigations being undertaken by them following the interception of six containers containing *Bois de Rose* from Madagascar by the Mauritian customs in June 2011.

The request of the Malagasy authorities is two-fold: Execution of a seizure order made by the *Tribunal de Grande Instance* d'Antananarivo of 01 August 2011 and repatriation of the said *bois de rose* to Madagascar.

The State Law Office is also studying another request dated 03 January 2012 from the Ministry of Environment of Madagascar. In this request, Madagascar is now asking the Government of Mauritius to stay action on the request and instead to proceed to the sale of the rosewood in Mauritius on behalf of the Republic of Madagascar. At absolutely no time was an amicable settlement discussed.

I understand from customs that the *bois de rose* containers are still in Mauritius pending finalisation of the matter. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I informed Government at all times of the above. Thank you.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O.10 (2)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

At 4.10 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.50 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded the following Bills were read a first time -

- (a) The Maritime Zones (Amendment) Bill (No. V of 2012)
- (b) The Chagossian Welfare Fund (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2012)
- (c) The Legal Aid (Amendment) Bill (No. VII of 2012)
- (d) The Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill (No. VIII of 2012)

MOTION

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2012-2015

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the following motion of the hon. Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue (Mrs B. Juggoo) -

“This Assembly resolves that the Government Programme 2012-2015 presented to this Assembly on Monday 16 April 2012, copy of which has been circularised amongst Honourable Members, be and is hereby approved.”

Question again proposed.

The Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives (Mr J. Seetaram): Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me, at the very outset, to express my appreciation and thanks to Her Excellency, the Acting President of the Republic who, in a very dignified manner, confident in an eloquent style, has clearly articulated the Government’s vision for the next three years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, looking ahead, Mauritians have every reason to be confident. Other countries are facing the risk of a long-term economic decline. We have, in our case, a rare opportunity to position our country for a sustainable long-term growth and we have made our choice. This vision of our Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, our Government has chosen prosperity, sustainability, empowerment and nation-building for all Mauritians.

The Government Programme for the next three years is a clear indication that we will take decisive action to ensure our economy will create employment opportunities and sustain a high quality of life for our children and grandchildren. In fact, where others find obstacles, we foresee opportunities; where our opponents have given up and shied away from their responsibilities, we have taken the challenges and confronted them boldly.

In this new programme, Government is looking ahead not only over the next few years, but also over the next generation, including our next mandate for 2015 and 2020. We are taking major steps forward to build on the strong foundation we have laid down since 2005. We are avoiding foreseeable problems while seizing new opportunities in the global economy. The

measures which are being proposed are substantial, responsible and necessary. They will ensure we are focussed on enabling and sustaining the country's long-term economic growth, social cohesiveness and ultimately, create a more prosperous and fairer society for all.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for this new programme the scene is all set for Mauritius to graduate from being an upper middle income country to that of a higher income nation. Mauritius has all the ingredients required to do so. We have a huge Exclusive Economic Zone and converting ourselves in an Ocean State is a genius idea which clearly demonstrates the innovative approach which underpins this Government's philosophy. The ocean economy would broaden our horizon and would bring new pillars and polls of development for the country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the question that begs an answer is; "why was this National Assembly prorogued?" We have heard so many comments, far-fetched and at times bordering on hysteria. We were accused of running away, *soi-disant* afraid of Question Time and what not. But the truth is that circumstances have changed. The paradox nowadays has only one constant that is "change". The world economic order is undergoing an abysmal transition and there is a big shift. This does not exclusively refer to the current Euro crisis. It is a fact that the crisis dominates the centre stage but the "big shift" takes place in the background. It does not go unnoticed, but it receives less attention. I am here, Mr Speaker, Sir, referring to the continuous rise of emerging economies. This development is to the crisis as plate tectonics is to a volcanic eruption. It is slower, yet to its implication that might be larger. In the face of these developments, the Government has no other alternatives than to adopt the more creative and innovative approach that is to survive in this jungle. And this is what we have done, and brilliantly so. This is what the new programme is about: the new vision for a brilliant future for our youths. Whereas on the other side, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would have to highlight the current circumstances and it is such a pity today to refer to what we have today before all of us: the MSM and the MMM are not present for this *discours programme*. Whereas, Mr Speaker, Sir, I refer to Tuesday, 09 December 2010, during his summing up on debates of the Budget 2011, hon. Pravind Jugnauth said –

"Mr Speaker, Sir, they are an opposition 'bye looké.'; they are just waiting in the corridor, right now, waiting when the summing-up will be over so that they can come back."

Mr Speaker, Sir, irony! Today, it is the same hon. Pravind Jugnauth who has joined the MMM in the *bye looké* session. And also, who can forget the heated arguments in this august Assembly where also I refer to Hansard, hon. Jugnauth mentioned –

“*Johnny, the one who is of Scottish origin, and who keeps walking away all the time.*”

He stylishly phrased it himself. Today, the MSM and the MMM keep on walking out of this Assembly all the time. What are their proposals, Mr Speaker Sir? None! As put it by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the rumours have it. This is my information obtained, no source whatsoever. Again, I go to Hansard where the word ‘shameful’ was used again by same hon. Jugnauth. He said –

“What a shame! The Opposition is absent for this debate and they have signified their intention not to participate in the completion of debates in the context of Government Programme. They are not assuming their responsibility. In fact, they are paid from public funds. They are supposed to be defending the population at large, to be voicing their views with regard to that important *discours*, but we do not see them.”

We don’t see him either! We don’t see them either! This is from the Hansard. Mr Speaker, Sir, what should be a shameful word today? What is the word ‘shame’ today? This is clearly demonstrated before us. Who is not assuming his responsibility despite the fact that he is being paid from public funds? I leave it to their own judgment.

This Government has no lesson whatsoever to take from the Opposition and this Opposition has been casting so many allegations on this Government, that is, PQs and PNQs are being repeated into fiascos. Also, the Opposition has accused us of what not, of *transfugisme*, of an illegal Government, of *anti-démocrate*. When they talked of *transfugisme*, it is what the MSM has done; has left this Government, has crossed the Floor to go in the Opposition, that is, the Westminsterian system of Parliament. But it is also sad to note that this has been also repeated in some section of the press. Whereas it also says concerning of *transfugisme*, change allegiance. Who has changed allegiance? Who was elected on a programme in 2010 and who has changed and went over there? Again we have questions to be put and reflections to be made. Again, the MMM also, are they blameless? We also have to think. In 1990, when the MMM got six ministerial portfolios, what happened? Another example which I shall relate. This is history, Mr Speaker, Sir. In 1990, led by hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, his Government was destabilised as a result of departure from Government. Furthermore, there was some friction

between some Ministers at that time and to make sure that his majority in Parliament did not falter, he agreed to conclude an agreement with the MMM. At that time, Ministers like Nababsing, de l'Estrac and Kasenally were there. The Leader of the Opposition who did not form part of Parliament at that time, he got the post of Adviser in disarmament. The MMM made his entry in the Government obtaining six ministerial posts. The Leader of the Opposition became the special Adviser of Sir Anerood Jugnauth in matters of *désarmement* and he got even an office and a parking space at *l'hôtel du gouvernement* at that time. All was alright. There was no *tranfugisme*. There was no illegal Government. There was no *anti-démocrate*. But today, they should not be acting like *les vierges effarouchées* because they have gone through that road and they cannot teach lessons to this Government; a Government which has vision and which shows a brilliant future for our youths. Worse, Mr Speaker, Sir, a *coup d'état* attempt. Like I put it the other day, a *coup de balai*. Can you imagine week in week out, adverse speculations on newspapers?

Mr Speaker: I will now have to stop the hon. Minister. He cannot refer to things that have happened outside the House and bring them to debate. He has to talk to things that have happened within the House.

Mr Seetaram: Adverse speculation on our economy - obviously, this was reflected internationally. What about the reputation of the country? What about our investments? What about our FDI? This economy depends on investment. As a responsible Government we do our best to sustain the economy. But what about the Opposition? Shouldn't they be a responsible Opposition instead of making adverse speculations week in week out?

Mr Speaker, Sir, speaking of these particular circumstances are, indeed, justifiable, because the leader of the MSM expressed himself on that matter during the debate. That was on Tuesday 16 November 2010, irony again, and today what has happened? I quote -

« M. le président, je suis très heureux de faire partie de l'équipe gouvernementale bleu-blanc-rouge, deuxième génération qui a été concrétisée sur la base de la confiance, de la sincérité et, certainement, d'une volonté farouche pour servir le pays et le peuple en vue de marquer de son empreinte l'île Maurice moderne de l'avenir. »

The question is: where is that « *sincérité* » et *confiance* »? It has flown away! It had disappeared, evaporated, only 15 months after the Alliance ! And, further, the leader of the MSM, in his vote of thanks stated –

“Je profite de l’occasion pour remercier le Premier ministre pour la confiance qu’il a placée en moi et en mon parti, afin que nous puissions ensemble propulser notre pays vers de nouveaux sommets en matière de développement socio-économique et en dépit ... »

At that time –

« ...de toutes les tractations, des manigances, des combines dans différents milieux pour tenter de marginaliser mon parti. »

He was referring to his party. But he said again –

“Le Premier ministre a accordé au MSM la considération qu’il mérite. Mon parti et moi-même, nous sommes déterminés à travailler avec la sincérité qui a toujours marqué notre action. »

Again, we see that today they are not here, not even in Parliament, not even with this Government. Where is the “*tractation*” today? Where is the “*manigance*”? Where is the “*combine*”? What has happened recently? It is simply an attempt to *destabilise* this Government but, as I have always said, we have a mighty general with a mighty army.

(Interruptions)

And again this mighty general with this mighty army has got one God. *Le Dieu pour le Parti Travailleuse*. Hon. Jugnauth has always said, at that time -

«Combien de temps les Mauriciens vont-ils subir - je n’ai peut-être pas le mot pour décrire ce que le Leader de l’Opposition a l’habitude de faire, je l’appellerai des ‘coustiques’ - l’hypocrisie du Leader de l’Opposition ? »

He also mentioned zigzag. Who does not remember zigzag?

Mr Speaker: I don't think that the speech of the former Minister of Finance forms part of this. I have given the hon. Minister sufficient time to make your point. Come back to the Government Programme.

Mr Seetaram: If I may, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am just trying to make a distinction.

Mr Speaker: I think the hon. Minister has made his point.

Mr Seetaram: So, again, like I said ‘zigzag’ was mentioned and further he said that -

“Le MMM being a succursale de malhonnêteté intellectuelle... ».

Mr Speaker: Keep some for another occasion!

Mr Seetaram: He also said that MMM's zigzags were no more than "*du cirque au parfum mauve*" *et, aujourd'hui, c'est du cirque au parfum mauve et orange!*

I think this is sickening and should stop because the youth of this country, the youth of Mauritius, have had enough of such kind of politics. And the youth of Mauritius require a new vision, a new programme, as has been clearly laid out by this Government and this has been clearly sustained by the immense crowd that the Labour Party has had recently. In contrast with this Government that shows unity, commitment, the drive for his people, for his economy, for the aged population, for the youth, we have an Opposition who is divided. Divided and shattered and nearly going to disappear and, up to now, there have been two major collateral victims in this filthy circus. Unfortunately, we have Ashock Jugnauth, who was with the MMM and hon. Guimbeau. Hon. Guimbeau resigned as a member of the PMSD; he was the deputy leader, for his sake...

Mr Speaker: I won't allow this. Come back to the speech!

Mr Seetaram: So, he was with the Alliance du Coeur, with the MMM.

Mr Speaker: The Member is persisting. Turn the pages!

Mr Seetaram: Exactly, just to say what has happened in contrast with our programme because they have been criticising our programme, saying that we are an illegal Government, *anti-démocrate*. I am just trying to say, in contrast what has happened and what is happening. Again challenging this Government Programme and the fake remake, Mr Speaker, Sir, is relevant because there is at the root, the Med Point scandal, termed by the MMM itself as "*scandale du siècle*." What is happening today? The MSM are with them! Now, it has become the *blanchiment du siècle*. When being asked why now, it is *the blanchiment du siècle*, the answer of the Leader of the Opposition is that: "at that time, I have received false information" and now already this new alliance, which was meant to bring Government down, is suffering from a few casualties. What I can say, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that here, in this Government, we have *l'union*, whereas, in the other side, in the Opposition, *l'Opposition division*.

Again, why? They are not sitting together even in Parliament - *division*. They do not do press conferences together and also the worse, if they are trying to proclaim that they can be proposed as the next alternative of this Government, then I believe it would be relevant for me to make some comments about it. 30 tickets given to MSM, 30 tickets given MMM and *selon toute probabilité un tiers sera les dames* like we know, all the major developments..

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, has this happened in this House? I have told you that you cannot bring extraneous matters in the debate in the House. Things that have taken place here should be discussed here. What has happened outside, you have another forum to do that.

Mr Seetaram: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. Again, we have it from the other side that there is no consensus. Again, we do not know how many of them are going to be in or out.

Mr Speaker: I have been empowered by the Standing Orders, if the hon. Minister persists in what he is doing, I can ask him to sit down.

Mr Seetaram: I shall quickly come back to the Programme in its essence while having paraded with the political bits.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government has put much efforts for les *petites et moyennes entreprises* and, concerning the business and enterprise sector, the democratisation of the economy is the cornerstone of the actions and development philosophy of this Government. Over the past seven years, there have been relentless efforts to broaden the circle of opportunities for every single Mauritian. Inequalities in the concentration of wealth and productive assets have long been the most important stumbling block towards a fair and equitable distribution of income. It is also well documented and highly recognised that policies to expand education will have less of an impact in countries where assets and with them access to entrepreneurial opportunities are distributed in a highly unequal fashion. It is also that entrepreneurship and democracy are closely linked because there are two dimensions of personal freedom. Entrepreneurs are the revolutionaries of our country and by exercising their economic freedom to serve markets as they see fit are key players in promoting the freedom that brings and sustains democracy. They constantly challenge the economic *status quo*. They give consumers wider choices because of the constant flow of new products and services.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government has taken to challenge and has made unprecedented efforts for the small and medium enterprises. In this 2012 Budget, my colleague, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, announced a comprehensive set of measures to boost the SME sector. These measures were unprecedented. They span access to finance at extremely affordable rates, land capital participation on fairs, abroad markets both domestic and regional, monitoring and follow-up, mentoring as well as assistance with a preparation of these plans.

Our aim is to create a nation of entrepreneurs by facilitating as much as possible the setting up of businesses in the SME sector and to expand and establish a strong class of risk takers in the world of business. The problems which entrepreneurs face are as follows: lack of access to finance, lack of access to industrial space, lack of access to markets and lack of access to information and technology. All these have been tackled and have been taken into consideration especially in the new Programme where a total amount of Rs3 billion is being made available to our SMEs on an extremely favourable term through commercial banks to SMEs where they obtain loans at Repo Rate plus 3%. This scheme is a success so far. At the end of March 2012, 356 applications for loans from SMEs had reached Rs544 m. and after assessment Rs313 m. have already been approved.

The National Resilience Fund has Rs7.3 billion for the next three years. SMEs will be able to access support from the Fund for leasing of equipment, factoring scheme to assist in working capital, provision of insurance cover on export and local sales, equity fund to support corporate restructuring and new measures start-up entrepreneurship schemes and innovative measures announced in 2012 Budget where a salary of Rs20,000 monthly over a year to help an entrepreneur through the financial challenges that normally characterise any start-up. This scheme is in place since 03 January 2012. 49 applications have been received following a first call for proposal in January 2012 and 30 projects have been retained.

A second call for proposal is scheduled for June 2012. Again there is a new measure - a 90:10 Pay Back Scheme - which has been operational as from last year. The assistance is provided by the MBGS Unit for financing the cost of consultancy up to a maximum of Rs3 m. The entrepreneur has to inject 10% of the assistance sought and this has to be off front. The remaining 90% is given to beneficiary enterprises in the form of an unsecured loan on an instalment basis. Repayment of the loan is made at the rate of 11% on annual incremental sales starting during the third year of the scheme. No repayment is expected if there is no proof. This scheme is mostly for companies which are saturating or which have the same turnover over so many years and when they require that help expertise. As at the end of April 2012, 115 companies have been assisted by the MBGS for the sum of Rs109 m. as follows: small enterprise 57; medium enterprise 39; large enterprise 19, that is, under 115 altogether.

Most importantly concerning access to industrial space, as it was announced the construction of 175 units has been in process and these 175 SME units are located as follows: 15

units in Roche Bois; 40 units at La Tour Koenig; 40 units at La Valette, Bambous; 40 units at Plaine Magnien; 40 units at Solitude. The contracts for the units at Roche Bois, La Tour Koenig and La Valette, Bambous would be awarded soon. Procedure for vesting of land at Solitude and Plaine Magnien are well under way. Other sites have been identified and the provision of facilities to entrepreneurs on a site and services basis is well being considered. Access to the market has also been considered.

The scheme has been put in place whereby an entrepreneur can benefit from a maximum of 100,000 every year for taking part in international fairs and broadening his horizon or even exposing his products. 40 applications have been received at the EM and 16 applications for SMEs have been approved while the remaining are being evaluated. SMEDA has upgraded its portal so that now entrepreneurs can showcase their products up to 300 items online. Increased visibility at a very minimal cost and the outreach is huge.

SMEDA also operates an exhibition room where products are exposed and sold. There are several boutiques which SMEDA operates around the country and also SMEs are given positive consideration for public procurement contracts; the benefit from further margin of preference as well as being shortlisted on every public procurement exercise of less than Rs5 m.

SMEDA has entered into a MoU with the Mauritius Posts Limited and this will benefit all entrepreneurs concerning courier service and also all networks of Mauritius Posts including FedEx and DHL. SMEs have the possibility of showcase their products on the online galleries of the company. They are also provided with a range of services to meet the specific needs of SMEs. These include postal and couriers, marketing services, financial services, post assurance services and electronic services. Also access to information has been tackled where access to information is vital for SMEs for their survival. This is done through the sensitisation and information campaigns. The existing of a website for SMEDA has been completely revisited and converted into a SME portal acting as a single point of entry not only to provide helpful business information and online counselling, but also access to e-commerce facilities for a range of business operations and easy access to online business solutions using a cloud environment.

A Resource and Technology Centre has been set up also at SMEDA. It aims at understanding the mechanism for obtaining appropriate technology relevant for each particular sector which SME operates. The centre will act as a knowledge repository for SMEs to secure new technology through proper information channels and will provide SMEs with latest

information on new machinery, equipment and sourcing of right materials. The re-engineering of SME support institutions has been proposed. It is proposed to hire the services of a consultant to formulate a strategic plan for SMEs for the next five years. It is expected that the local consultant will be in place by the end of this month and the final report will be delivered early July 2012. It will set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for evaluating schemes for SMEs.

Besides, business and enterprise, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now turn to the Cooperative Sector. The Cooperative Sector, as you may be aware, has over 120,000 members, 920 cooperative societies and its turnover for the Cooperative Sector has reached Rs4.1 billion and the Cooperatives operate in 30 different sectors.

Obviously, the values of Cooperatives, that is, self-help, self-responsibility, solidarity, equity, quality and democracy are being sustained. Cooperatives, as a special business model, are being portrayed. Cooperative focuses on a triple bottom line –

- (i) economic success,
- (ii) social progress, and
- (iii) environment stewardship.

Cooperatives are a people-centered organisation democratically controlled and jointly owned by their members. They aggregate market force of the individual members, especially those with limited resources. They operate in a sustainable way. Effective empowerment and democratisation of the economy is a must and they enable people to join the economic mainstream.

The greater role of the potential, that is, make it a *secteur avant-gardiste*. Cooperatives assist in achieving national objectives such as increasing self-sufficiency ratio, combating unemployment, social cohesion, eradication of the poverty and sustainable development, that is, we are going towards green economy and also towards fair trade.

Cooperatives and national objective that the Government cherishes, that is, the principles, the values of the cooperative movement which are effective towards democratisation of the economy. Cooperatives may assist in increasing the self-sufficiency ratio, combating unemployment and initiatives to consolidate and reinvigorate the cooperative sector which we are doing as this year is the International Year of Cooperatives decreed by the United Nations and the theme being “Cooperative Enterprises build a Better World”. It is an opportunity to

sensitise more people, more individuals about the cooperative movement, about the role and socio-economic importance of cooperatives and sensitisation campaigns, project competitions, national cooperative fairs have been put forward to boost the cooperative movement, to increase the visibility of Cooperatives as an alternative way of doing business.

Other initiatives put forward are the Fair Trade Concept which has been successfully implemented in the sugar sector and it has benefitted for over 4,000 small planters concerning the Fair trade premium of US\$60 per *tonne* of sugar produced. For the year 2011/12, it is estimated that a 13,000 *tonnes* of fair trade sugar at fair trade premium receivable is to the tune of 22 million. The fair trade premium used is to implement socio-economic projects and this has been extended to fruits, vegetables and honey.

Further, to give more access to the market to our cooperatives, since February 2012, a series of cooperatives and SMEs Fairs in various localities around the island, namely Quatre Bornes, Vacoas, Plaisance/Rose Hill, Triolet, Pamplemousses, Barkly/Beau Bassin, Rivière du Rempart also fairs have been organised and greater access has been given, that is, greater visibility to cooperatives and SMEs.

New ventures in cooperatives, that is, Cooperative Federations entering into joint agreement with regional institutions to facilitate exports of goods and services, that is, transfer of technology and knowhow.

Recently, *La Chambre de Commerce et de l'Industrie de la Réunion* and the Mauritius Consumers' Cooperative Federation have signed an MoU on 16 November. Also, another MoU signed on 20 September 2011 with the Indian Farmers Fertilisers Cooperatives (IFFCO) was to facilitate the production of bio-fertiliser in Mauritius. Consultations are being finalised soon with Indian authorities and the Sri-Lankan authorities for another MoU.

Not to say the least, in the Cooperative Movement, much effort is being dedicated to the empowerment of women. A first time grant of Rs500,000 to the Mauritius Women Entrepreneurs Cooperative Federation was given and this was with the aim of having a sales outlet in regions like big shopping malls or large spaces for trading purposes - and we have it. This was a budgetary measure and this is being implemented where the sales outlet is expected to be operational in June/July 2012.

Concerning the fishermen cooperatives, steps to reinvigorate the fishermen cooperative sector have been taken and most of our *Maison des pêcheurs* have been renovated. Value added

activities and marketing of fish products have been undertaken and also the upgrading of further premises of *Maison des pêcheurs* have also been undertaken.

In this Government Programme, the review of the legal framework for the promotion of the cooperative model is also under way and this legal review would eliminate the loopholes as these loopholes created impediments and this new framework would be more practical for cooperatives and this would enlarge powers of cooperative tribunals under the Cooperatives Act to hear and determine complex cases and also the setting up of a Cooperative Law Advisory Committee is under way.

Further, we have to promote the cooperative model among the youth and also among women. Training, sensitisation programmes and workshops by National Institute for Cooperative Entrepreneurship (NICE) have been working throughout the year and also projects, competition, essays, seminars, workshops on succession planning by Cooperative Federations have been undertaken.

Further, concerning the extension of fair trade, the successful implementation in the sugar sector has given much hope to other sectors and to roll on the concept of Fair Trade to the non-sugar sector, to enable small producers in other sectors to benefit from Fair Trade, we are targeting the production of fruits such as pineapple, lemon, flowers and vegetables as well as honey and very recently meetings and talks have been undertaken with pineapple growers at Les Mariannes and also soon in the eastern side of Mauritius around Camp de Masque. Producers will benefit from a minimum price to cover their cost of production and a fair trade premium to be used for economic, environmental and social development. Government will extend facilities for its accreditation.

In conclusion, the Government Programme provides for a diversified, modern rejuvenated and enlarged cooperative movement with an increasing share in the socio-economic development of our country.

Before I conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would wish to make a few highlights to the projects that have been undertaken in Constituency No. 10 and here I would like to thank my two colleague Ministers, hon. Cader Sayed-Hossen and hon. Dr. Jeetah, who have worked towards, I would say, the welfare of our *mandants*.

Projects have been completed like the construction of the Morcellement Sohawon Bridge, the construction of drains, pavements, handrails, mainly from Médine to Camp de Masque and

from Bramsthan to Caroline; installation of poles in Sept Croisées, Trou d'Eau Douce; there is also the construction of a roundabout, the construction of an ultra-modern Social Welfare Centre complex in Caroline with the help of hon. Lormus Bundhoo; we have the asphaltting of new roads along the Heera Durga Mandir and cremation ground in Bel Air Rivière Sèche; we have the renovation of the Basdeo Rosunee Government School in Bramsthan among other projects. But we have also forthcoming projects like the GRSE waterfront, the Montagne-Blanche by-pass from Pellegrin, Sebastopol to Petit Paquet Branch Road and also the Bel Air by-pass.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, I should say that this Government has taken all aspects of the economy in consideration. And this Government, with its vision, is tackling all challenges, not only for the immediate future, but for generations ahead, as I said, not only for the 2015 election, but further even 2020. This Government does not believe in rumours or *palabres*. This Government does not believe only in talks, in committees or in meetings, this Government believes in action, believes in the vision of its Prime Minister. This Government is not scared of anyone, of who is going to threaten by action, that they have information from so and so. Or, the rumours say it from so and so. This Government is working towards the future of the youth and there is *bâton ki pe mette dans la roue*, as we say. But this Government is not scared of those who *mette bâton dans la roue* because this Government does not believe in *prophète de malheur* because this Government is committed towards a better Mauritius, a Mauritius which has a brilliant future for its youth, for its upcoming generation under the sole leadership of its Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(5.33 p.m.)

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have the honour to speak under your Chairpersonship.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to, first, start by congratulating Her Excellency, Mrs Ohsan-Bellepeau for this very beautiful discours de ce programme gouvernemental et je

voudrais féliciter l'honorable Premier ministre pour ce programme gouvernemental qui est un programme axé vers l'avenir des jeunes, de la nouvelle génération mauricienne. C'est un programme innovateur, c'est un programme ambitieux et c'est un programme qui est aussi audacieux. C'est un programme, M. le président, qui est aussi dans la tradition avant-gardiste du parti travailliste et du PMSD. Pourquoi je dis cela, je vais revenir là-dessus tout à l'heure mais je voudrais – avant que j'entre dans les détails du programme gouvernemental - remercier l'honorable Madame Juggoo pour sa motion qui nous donne l'opportunité de débattre de ce discours programme qui est très audacieux pour le pays.

Je l'ai dit tout à l'heure, M. le président, c'est un discours programme audacieux dans la tradition du parti travailliste et du PMSD parce que le titre même de ce discours programme c'est *moving the nation forward*. *Moving the nation forward* à l'opposé de ce que les bancs vides - d'ailleurs, M. le président, je crois qu'il faut demander à nos amis de l'opposition, puisqu'ils sont en train de faire du *half-time duty* - ils devraient au moins avoir la décence, s'ils ne veulent pas ne pas prendre leurs salaires, de faire une donation de ce temps qu'ils sont en dehors à chômer, à des associations ...

(Interruptions)

Disons qu'ils ne veulent pas ne pas prendre leurs salaires, au moins ils peuvent faire des donations à des associations charitables. Pendant que nous, ici, nous sommes en train de travailler, de débattre et de voir comment on peut améliorer le quotidien des citoyens et pendant que nous, on est en train de parler des choses sérieuse, ici, dans cette Chambre, l'opposition n'a absolument rien à dire sur ce programme gouvernemental. C'est un aveu d'échec parce qu'ici c'est le forum, ils devraient être là pour nous dire qu'est-ce qui n'est pas bon dedans, qu'est-ce qu'ils auraient mieux fait, quelles autres idées ils auraient amené. Mais ils n'ont rien à dire. La preuve ce sont les bancs vides là. C'est qu'ils n'ont rien à dire. Qu'est-ce qu'ils ont à dire, M. le président ? Que les rumeurs ! *The rumour mill* ! Le *Leader* de l'opposition aujourd'hui, il n'a pas honte, après 40 ans de carrière, de parler que des rumeurs. Le Premier ministre lui a dit ce matin. *He should learn*. Il

revient à chaque fois avec des rumeurs. Qui ne se souvient pas de l'affaire lannate. Il savait qui avait mis de lannate, combien, quelle heure. C'était des rumeurs, je suppose. Ici, dans cette Chambre, il a fait serment sur la tête de son enfant que Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam était un assassin. La honte pour ce *Leader* de l'opposition ! La honte ! Là, l'année dernière, c'était le

scandale du siècle et aujourd'hui, il nous dit qu'il avait des mauvais renseignements. Mais quand est-ce qu'il parle vrai, quand est-ce qu'il ment ? Je me demande, M. le président, un *Leader* de l'opposition de ce type, dans quel pays au monde, il aurait survécu 40 ans de carrière ? C'est avec la complicité de nos médias qu'aujourd'hui un *Leader* de l'opposition de ce type peut revenir, parler des mensonges sincèrement sur la tête de son enfant pour dire que Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam était un assassin, venir ici dans cette Chambre et dire qu'il y avait de l'annate dans notre sucre qu'on exporte. Et c'était faux ! Venir dire le scandale du siècle ! Et puis aujourd'hui, ce matin, vous avez vu, M. le président, quelle honte pour lui, pour ce *Leader* de l'opposition ? J'ai honte pour lui. Quelle honte pour lui et quelle honte pour ce pays ? Un *Leader* de l'opposition qui a 40 ans de carrière se met debout dans un Parlement et dit : *according to rumours*. Il faut que le *Speaker* l'arrête et lui dit de *rephrase*. Alors il dit : *according to information that I have. But where is his information, table it!*

Mais, M. le président, cela vous démontre la banqueroute de cette opposition. It was spent force. Even in Opposition, they are spent force. Ici, on est en train de débattre des vraies préoccupations des Mauriciens et des Mauriciennes. As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are here, under the leadership of this Prime Minister to move the nation forward. And move the nation forward, we have been and we will continue to do.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ce que j'accueille dans ce discours programme, comme c'est dit dans les premières pages, le gouvernement va mettre en place un *National Strategic Transformation Commission* et je me réjouis que ce *National Strategic Transformation Commission* sera sous l'égide du *Prime Minister's Office* parce que vous vous souviendrez, M. le président, qu'ici même dans ce parlement j'avais posé une question parlementaire au Premier ministre. C'était quand l'ancien ministre des finances était toujours de ce côté de la Chambre et j'avais dit que ce projet ne devrait pas être piloté par n'importe quel *Tom, Dick and Harry*. *I am glad that the Tom, Dick and Harry are over there now!* Cette Commission va être sous l'égide du Premier ministre parce que la vision d'avenir d'un pays doit être normalement sous l'égide d'un Premier ministre et personne d'autre et donc je me réjouis. M. le président, je dois dire que dans le paragraphe où on parle de ce *National Strategic Transformation Commission*, on parle aussi du vision 2020 que le gouvernement présidé par l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam en 1997 avait publié. Vision 2020 que j'ai eu l'occasion d'aller revoir un peu et je dois vous dire que j'ai été vraiment impressionnée. C'est un document qui avait été publié en 1997 et ce

document de Vision 2020, avec le Parti Travailleiste au pouvoir, parlait déjà de l'industrie ICT, de Maurice Ile Durable, pas dans ces termes, mais parlait déjà de *sustainability*. J'ai été vraiment impressionnée par ce document de Vision 2020 et je me réjouis qu'aujourd'hui sous le *leadership* de l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, on vient avec la prochaine étape: l'avenir de 20 à 30 ans pour ce pays.

Dans ce contexte, M. le président, je ne peux pas m'abstenir de dire au moins un mot sur l'*Ocean State*. Je ne vais pas m'attarder là-dessus, mais je crois qu'il faut que cela aille *on record* que c'est sous ce Premier ministre, d'ailleurs je crois que le Premier ministre a eu l'occasion de le dire dans cette Chambre, il y avait Monsieur Mohamed Vayid qui avait fait ce commentaire : que l'histoire retiendra que c'est ce Premier ministre qui a fait que notre étendue géographique soit multipliée par des milliers. Parce qu'au paragraphe 16 du *Government Programme*, à la page 8, on lit –

«Thus Mauritius now has a total area of 2.3 million square kilometres over which it can exercise various economic rights. This is more than...»

Tenez-vous bien, M. le président !

“...one thousand and one hundred times larger than our land mass – an area bigger than that of the combined land area of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and UK.”

One thousand and one hundred times! C'est ce Premier ministre, l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, qui a fait que le territoire sous lequel on peut avoir des *economic rights* soit multiplié par mille et cent fois! Il faut que l'histoire retienne *and gives credit to where it belongs*. *As usual*, tout ce qui est avant-gardiste est fait sous ce Premier ministre, sous la houlette du Parti Travailleiste. Nous en sommes fiers, extrêmement fiers. Il y en a qui ont – l'opposition *bye looké* – ricané. Il y en a un qui a dit : *l'océan ki pou nourri zotte*. Ils ne savent rien. Ils ne comprennent rien ! Absolument rien ! Leurs ricanements prouvent qu'ils ne comprennent absolument rien de rien ! A part venir sauver le petit crétin, ils n'ont rien de toutes les façons sous leur houlette.

M. le président, le deuxième chapitre de ce programme gouvernemental parle de connectivité. On parle d'*intelligent island*. Sous le ministre de l'ICT on est en train de faire de l'Ile Maurice une Ile Maurice connectée. Petit à petit - parce que nous sommes un pays où nous n'avons pas de pétrole, le diamant et l'or - c'est un pays qui est en train d'être transformé dans une île connectée. Dans ce même sujet, il y a le projet du *Nationwide Mass Transit System*. On n'est pas en train de parler juste de métro léger, on est en train de parler d'un plus grand projet

Nationwide Mass Transit System, c'est-à-dire un système qui va relier toute l'île Maurice, du nord au sud, de l'est à l'ouest. Eventuellement, comme on a dit toutes ces années, transformé l'île Maurice en un *City State*. La première étape sera le métro léger. Mais en gros, éventuellement, c'est de transformer ce pays en un *City State* avec un nouveau aéroport. Vous l'avez vu, M. le président, cet aéroport qui est en train de prendre forme sous nos yeux, encore une fois, avec un gouvernement Parti Travailleuse/PMSD, encore une fois sous la houlette de ce Premier ministre, l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam.

Ce matin, on a parlé de *Africa hub*. Il y avait des questions parlementaires. Qu'est-ce que l'honorable Li Kwong Wing - toujours une opposition palabre - disait ce matin à l'honorable Xavier Duval ? Il est en train de travailler *across purpose* avec le *Prime Minister's Office*. On voit cette mentalité de soi-disant mettre *chula*, la mesquinerie ! Mais non ! Dans le *Government Programme* ainsi que dans le budget de l'honorable Xavier Luc Duval, c'est déjà mentionné que le *national airline* va travailler pour qu'il y ait un *Africa hub* et pour qu'on puisse aller plus sur le marché africain.

M. le président, je voudrais dire quelques mots maintenant sur le troisième chapitre qui est le *People Chapter* de ce *Government Programme*. C'est là que je voudrais m'attarder un peu parce que je crois que les mesures qu'on est en train de mettre dans ce *Government Programme* au chapitre de l'humain sont vraiment révolutionnaires et avant-gardistes encore une fois, M. le président. Quand vous regardez surtout l'emphase sur le *Early Childhood Development*, on est en train de dire dans ce programme gouvernemental – je crois que ce n'est pas un secret pour personne que *the crucial foundation years* est entre zéro et trois ans. C'est-à-dire que l'enfant qui a entre zéro et trois ans, si on ne lui donne pas toutes les possibilités déjà dans cette tranche d'âge, arrivé à *standard I* à cinq ans, c'est déjà trop tard parce que les 'handicaps' sont déjà encrés et cela fait que l'enfant commence avec un handicap et ne peut pas peut-être se permettre de prendre toutes les opportunités que le gouvernement et la société lui donnent. Je suis extrêmement contente qu'on met tant d'emphase sur le *crucial foundation years*. A titre d'exemple, M. le président, au paragraphe 4 du *Government Programme* on parle –

«*For each newborn, Government will provide the parents with a Child Health Passport.*»

C'est important, M. le président, on parlait de *early detection* ce matin dans un des *Parliamentary Questions* concernant la question de l'autisme. *Le Child Health Passport for newborns* va aider pour que les enfants soient suivis et qu'il y a des *early detection* s'il y a des

problèmes. M. le président, vous avez été enseignant. Souvent on voit que si un enfant n'est pas suivi, il a des problèmes de vision, d'oreilles et que si cela n'est pas pris en amont, cela devient un problème plus aigu après. Donc, je salue cette mesure de *Child Health Passport* parce que dans les autres paragraphes, dans les écoles primaires cela va être *updated* et il y a un suivi.

Qu'est-ce qu'on voit aujourd'hui, M. le président ? Aujourd'hui, avec l'île Maurice qui est un *middle income country*, avec l'ambition de devenir un *high income country*, on voit, comme dans tous les pays les plus développés au monde, qu'il y a un problème de *health*, de se prendre en charge. On sait - et ce n'est pas un secret pour personne - qu'à Maurice, on a un gros problème de diabète; on a un gros problème d'hypertension, cela veut dire qu'on est en train de négliger notre propre santé. On n'est pas en train de prendre notre responsabilité concernant notre santé. Aujourd'hui, avec ce *child health passport*, on va avoir un suivi au niveau de l'école primaire et cela donne non seulement à l'enfant, mais aussi à ses parents, une conscientisation en premier lieu et aussi une action envers la santé de chaque futur citoyen de ce pays et donc, c'est très, très intéressant et je crois que c'est *commendable*, M. le président.

Deuxième chose pour les *crucial foundation years*, ce sont les crèches de quartier. Vous savez, M. le président, l'honorable Duval avait annoncé dans le budget qu'il y a un montant de R1,500 par enfant pour les familles nécessiteuses, ce qui est révolutionnaire, parce que cela donne un *empowerment* extraordinaire aux femmes. Ce qui se passe c'est que les femmes doivent prendre soin des petits et elles ne peuvent pas être dans le monde du travail. Cela veut dire que pour elles-mêmes, c'est une question d'*empowerment* car cela leur permet d'être dans le monde du travail et de s'épanouir professionnellement, et cela permet à l'économie aussi de progresser et de prospérer.

Aujourd'hui avec cette mesure de crèches de quartier, ce n'est pas juste des mots en l'air, il y a aussi un *implementation* - 25 crèches de quartier par an pendant les trois prochaines années, surtout dans les complexes NHDC. Je crois que c'est une très bonne mesure pour ces mamans qui se trouvent dans les complexes NHDC où on est en train de faire des syndics, et il y en a 43. Dans chacun de ces 43 NHDC, il y aura une crèche. Les mamans pourront mettre leurs enfants sur place et elles auront en plus une allocation; ceux qui sont nécessiteux auront une allocation pour le faire. Ce qui veut dire que c'est un *win win* de deux cotés. C'est un *win win* pour la femme. C'est un *win win* pour l'enfant. C'est un *win win win* au fait pour la femme, un *win* pour

l'enfant et un *win* pour la nation et l'économie mauricienne. M. le président, encore une fois, c'est une mesure très positive.

L'autre mesure que je trouve très intéressante, M. le président, c'est à la page 18, paragraphe 16, le «*power efficient children's laptop*» qui va être remis aux enfants de la quatrième. M. le président, je suis contente que le ministre Bunwaree en ait parlé. Les laptops qu'on est en train de parler ici - le ministre a eu l'occasion de le dire - proviennent d'une organisation internationale, une ONG qui s'appelle *One Laptop Per Child*. J'ai fait des recherches et il y a plein d'informations sur l'internet concernant cette ONG - *One Laptop Per Child*. Il y a plein de programmes qu'ils ont implémentés à travers le monde et chez nos voisins aussi. Vous savez, M. le président, je suis triste quand j'ai entendu quelqu'un ici dire que ce sont des laptops *joujou*. Encore une fois, ils ne comprennent rien à rien. Ce programme est un programme *acclaimed over the world*. Ce sont des *laptops* qui coûtent à peu près 200 dollars l'unité, ce n'est pas juste une question de *computer*, c'est un nouveau *learning technique* qui est inclus dans cet appareil. *Obviously, they understand nothing and they comment a lot*.

Ces *laptops* sont connectés par eux-mêmes. Vous n'avez pas besoin du système wifi. C'est pour cela que tous les enfants doivent être dans une seule salle de classe et tous les enfants seront connectés *de facto* et ils peuvent échanger les *learning games* etc.

Aujourd'hui, M. le président, on sait que *it is not only fluency in numeracy or literacy, it is also digital fluency that is important. When you are very young and if you do not have digital fluency, you are marked for life*. Aujourd'hui, on sait que les plus petits enfants savent manier un portable, mais un portable c'est un mini-ordinateur. *This digital fluency* est un *sine qua non* aujourd'hui pour pouvoir communiquer et même vivre en société. Pour aller en l'avant, il faut avoir ce *digital fluency*. Donc, moi, je me réjouis de cette mesure et je condamne l'attitude négative - ce n'est même pas négatif, c'est triste qu'ils ne comprennent rien et font des commentaires sur les choses qu'ils ne comprennent pas.

A la page 19, M. le président, dans le chapitre pour les femmes, je souligne et j'accueille le paragraphe 38 sur «*Women's economic empowerment*» qui va dans la lignée de l'agenda de démocratisation de l'économie du Premier ministre. En collaboration avec le ministre Seetaram, la ministre Mireille Martin, le ministre Suren Dayal et aussi le ministre Satish Faugoo, il y a un programme qu'on est en train de faire surtout pour les femmes entrepreneurs avec un projet agro-écologie. C'est-à-dire qu'avec les terres que l'honorable Premier ministre a négocié avec les

sucriers dans lesquelles on a mille arpents pour la sécurité alimentaire, mille arpents pour les programmes de *housing* et dans ces milles arpents pour la sécurité alimentaire on a dit, avec la commission pour la démocratisation de l'économie, et les ministères concernés, qu'on va mettre en place un projet pour les femmes, surtout les femmes *unemployed*.

On sait que dans les chiffres de *unemployment*, le *male unemployment is at the frictional level*, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'a pas vraiment beaucoup de chômage au niveau des hommes. C'est *frictional*. *Frictional unemployment means you are almost at equilibrium*. Alors pour les femmes, c'est beaucoup plus élevé, donc il y a un *issue* et on est en train d'attaquer cela en invitant les femmes au chômage de devenir des femmes entrepreneurs tout en se mettant sur la sécurité alimentaire. C'est à dire qu'il y a trois paliers. Le premier palier concerne les femmes qui doivent produire pour leur propre sécurité alimentaire, c'est à dire, on leur donne un petit lot de terre et elles vont produire pour leur propre sécurité alimentaire et pour leur famille. Le deuxième palier concerne les femmes qui veulent devenir des petits entrepreneurs, et là avec la collaboration de mon ami, l'honorable Jim Seetaram, on est en train de mettre sur place des programmes spécifiques pour ces femmes qui veulent devenir des petits entrepreneurs, surtout à travers les coopératives. Et puis, il y a l'autre palier, M. le président, où il y a des femmes qui veulent prendre des lots beaucoup plus grands et se lancer industriellement dans l'élevage, dans la production de lait, etc, et là on aura le soutien du ministère des finances. Moi, je me réjouis et je suis très contente d'être *involved* avec mes collègues concernés dans ce projet spécifique, qui va encore une fois améliorer la vie des gens. On est là pour cela : améliorer la vie des gens, leur donner les moyens d'épanouissement et, en même temps, permettre au pays de progresser encore plus. C'est pour cela qu'on est là.

Je salue aussi le *White Paper on reproductive health*. On est en train aujourd'hui de parler d'une loi sur l'avortement que je salue. C'est bien qu'il y ait ce *White Paper* parce qu'il y a beaucoup de femmes - la ministre est d'accord - dans des quartiers pauvres surtout qui ne sont pas suffisamment informées sur leur *reproductive health*. I think this *White Paper on reproductive health* is a real positive step in the right direction to empower the women especially in the disadvantaged areas.

M. le président, au niveau de la société, au chapitre 4, je salue les mesures sur la qualité de la vie. Je ne vais pas en parler trop longuement, mais je crois qu'il faut les souligner.

Le gouvernement se propose de faire un *quality of life report card*, c'est-à-dire qu'au début de ce programme M. le président on a dit que ce programme s'inscrit dans la troisième phase du gouvernement *led by* Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. La première phase a commencé en 2005 jusqu'au *financial crisis* en 2008 où le gouvernement a essayé de mettre de l'ordre dans tout le dégât qu'ils avaient fait. Je vais juste vous dire, M. le président, que ces gens-là avaient pris le pouvoir en 2000 sur soi-disant '*a nou redress nu pays*'. On en a archi parlé, mais je crois que c'est bon que *I remind the House that Public Sector Debt as a percentage of GDP* en 2005 sous la nouvelle calculation était de 64%, sous l'ancienne calculation cela dépassait les 70%. Aujourd'hui, ce gouvernement, sous le *leadership* du Dr. Navin Ramgoolam depuis 2005, l'a ramené à 54%. Ce qui veut dire que le *debt service burden*, comme c'est écrit ici, a été réduit par 20%. Il en parle. Il y en a un qui avait fait une conférence de presse quand il avait démissionné de la présidence, et a parlé de l'endettement. Mais il ne sait rien, il vit 20-30 ans dans le passé.

Le *debt service burden* a été réduit par 20% depuis 2005 ; le déficit budgétaire, M. le président, était à 8.1% quand vous prenez en considération les R6 milliards de squelettes qu'il y avait dans les placards. Cette écriture de mettre des *liabilities* en dehors du budget, c'était du *good governance* ? C'est gens là qui vont nous dire ce que c'est que le *good governance and fiscal management*. Le déficit budgétaire était à 8.1% en 2005, on l'a ramené à 3.8% et, aujourd'hui, comme c'est dit dans le *Government Programme* au paragraphe 7, je vais vous le lire, parce que c'est important *that it goes on record* –

“As a result, and as promised, every new rupee of debt now goes towards financing investment in the future”.

Le déficit budgétaire sortant de 8.1%, pour arriver à 3.8% aujourd'hui et je dois vous dire, comme on le dit dans le *Government Programme*, tout cela sous le contrôle du *public finance*. Tout cela en faisant quoi? En réduisant la taxe ! Pas en augmentant la taxe ! C'était facile. On augmente la taxe et on diminue le déficit budgétaire. Non, on a diminué le déficit budgétaire tout en réduisant la taxe. Rappelez-vous, M. le président, le *personal tax rate* ! C'était quoi avant 2005 ? 30-35% ! Aujourd'hui, c'est à 15% *flat*. Donc, en faisant cela, on réduit la taxe mais, en même temps, réduire le déficit budgétaire. C'est cela le *public finance control*, et pas ce qu'ils faisaient eux. Je dois vous dire, M. le président, quand ils ont amené le déficit budgétaire à 8.1% avec leurs squelettes, comment avaient-ils fait cela? Est-ce qu'ils avaient réduit la taxe ? Non! Ils avaient augmenté la TVA à deux reprises par 50%. Donc

qu'est-ce qu'on voit ? On voit une équipe qui avait augmenté la TVA à deux reprises et, en même temps, en augmentant la TVA à deux reprises, ils réussissent à faire le déficit budgétaire gonfler à 8.1%. Ce sont des incompetents mais, plus que des incompetents, ce sont des gens dangereux. Ce sont des gens dangereux pour cette société, ce sont des gens dangereux pour cette nation, ce sont des gens ultra dangereux pour l'avenir de ce pays. Ce sont des gens qui n'ont plus leurs places. Ce sont des bluffeurs professionnels...

(Interruptions)

Oui absolument ! Hon. Hossen me rappelle l'épisode du ciblage. Tout ce qu'ils ont fait, c'est augmenter la TVA à deux reprises et la TVA frappe les pauvres le plus, ils ont enlevé la pension des vieilles personnes – ciblage - et malgré cela ils ont augmenté le déficit budgétaire. Mais qu'est-ce que c'est que cela? Ce sont des bluffeurs professionnels et ce sont des gens qui ont prouvé *beyond reasonable doubt that they are dangerous for this country. They cannot even do what they have to do for the public finances of this country.*

Pour la qualité de vie, je reviens sur ce que je disais, M. le président. On est en train de se diriger vers une nation qui sort d'un *middle income country pour devenir un high income country*. C'est normal que les citoyens veulent que leur qualité de vie soit augmentée et qu'il y ait une plus grande attention à la qualité de vie et je salue donc à la page 26, paragraphe 41, l'introduction d'un *Safer Community and Neighbourhood Act* et là je voudrais faire référence à ma circonscription par rapport à *safer and cleaner neighbourhood*.

J'ai mené une bataille sans relâche pour faire fermer un casino dans ma circonscription. J'en suis fière et je remercie le Premier ministre d'avoir agréé à cette demande. C'était important parce que quand on est en train de faire des activités, on a rien contre les casinos. Qu'ils fassent leur activités dans leur *area*, mais qu'ils n'impactent pas sur la vie de tous les jours de la société et là mon ami, l'hon. Xavier Luc Duval, n'est pas là, mais je voudrais faire ressortir que même, aujourd'hui, à Quatre Bornes, les samedis avec les bookmakers, encore une fois, que les bookmakers fassent leur *business*. Je vais revenir là-dessus à travers des questions et sur ce projet de loi pour démontrer que les *bookmakers* ont une responsabilité de ne pas pourrir l'environnement des citoyens normaux. Dans ma circonscription près de La Louise, à la rue Bigaignon près de Tristan Davis tout près du poste de police, je dois dire, il y a plein de maisons résidentielles et mes mandants sont venus vers moi et le ministre des finances, l'honorable Duval, pour dire que leur vie est pourrie tous les samedis. Ils ne peuvent pas sortir. Je suis allée

sur place, il y a des gens qui ne peuvent même pas sortir de leur cour parce que les gens viennent *gamble*. C'est leur droit, mais les *bookmakers* devraient *provide space and not the street*. On ne peut pas obstruer les entrées des gens. Les gens ne peuvent pas sortir de chez eux les samedis parce que tout le monde vient se garer devant chez eux, tous les *zougader* sont là. Ils se garent comme des sauvages devant la porte des gens, ils font la foule *in front of the area* et la police est à côté ! Ce n'est pas acceptable ! Aujourd'hui, on veut une qualité de vie meilleure et c'est normal. C'est normal que quand on veut aller encore plus haut comme un *high income nation*, les gens vont se soucier encore plus de leur qualité de vie.

M. le président, je ne vais pas m'attarder trop longtemps. Je viens à l'avant-dernier chapitre où il fait mention des différents changements de loi qu'il y aura pour permettre à une plus grande représentation des femmes dans la politique. Encore une fois, je félicite le Premier ministre et le ministre Hervé Aimée qui ont amené le cadre législatif pour permettre à un plus grand nombre de femmes à être présentes dans les élections locales. Et j'accueille cette mesure pour que les femmes soient encore plus présentes. Je sais que mes amis, les hommes, ne vont pas être contents....

(Interruptions)

...parce que certains d'entre eux vont devoir laisser la place. Je suis sûre que tout le monde ne serait pas content. Mais je félicite le Premier ministre. Encore une fois, c'est sous le Parti Travailleiste que les avancements avant-gardistes se font dans cette société, dans ce pays. Encore une fois, c'est le Parti travailleiste et le PMSD qui amènent les avancées avant-gardistes et c'est à noter, M. le président.

M. le président, je viens maintenant sur un projet, encore une fois, d'avenir avant-gardiste qui est mentionné dans ce discours-programme, à la page 32, aux paragraphes 18, 19 et 20. Je parle, ici, du *setting-up of the National Institute for Civic Education*. J'accueille cette mesure et je dois dire qu'il y a eu beaucoup de commentaires positifs que j'ai vus sur *facebook*, surtout les jeunes. C'est quoi ce programme? Ce programme c'est de mettre en place sur une base pilote un projet de service civique, c'est-à-dire, *a contrario* d'un service militaire. Je crois que le programme n'a pas encore statué. Ce sera sur une base pilote et puis le gouvernement va statuer si ce serait volontaire ou *compulsory*. Mais c'est extrêmement encourageant et, encore une fois, avant-gardiste de mettre - comme c'est dit dans le programme - à peu près 200 jeunes de toutes catégories, de toutes les couleurs, de toutes les ethnies de l'île Maurice ensemble dans un *core*

programme qui va donner encore une fois la chance aux jeunes. Et ce qui est important, c'est que l'objectif principal de ce programme c'est le *nation-building*. C'est *to consolidate even further le nation-building process* et *the objective of the programme is to foster a sense of shared human spirit, partnership for a common sense of purpose, and enterprise for the advancement of the nation*.

Je trouve très intéressant ce que le *Core Module* va faire. Ce sont des thèmes tels que *Life-skills, Healthy Lifestyles, Human Values and Empathy, Personal and Social Discipline, Environmental Stewardship, Cultural Creativity, Teamwork and National Pride*.

C'est vrai, M. le président, qu'aujourd'hui avec la mondialisation, avec la modernisation de la société, les jeunes ne sont pas comme on était avant. Il y a tellement d'informations, il y a tellement de choses. On voit très bien que les jeunes à Maurice ont besoin d'un programme fédérateur qui leur *instil a sense of nation, pride in the nation*, et quand ils vont graduer de ce programme, ils vont avoir une cérémonie qui va leur permettre de *pledge their responsibility and their service to the nation*. *I think this is very symbolic and very important. I have seen hundreds and thousands of very positive response on facebook, on blogs and on other forums and I think the young of this country are waiting impatiently for the setting up of this programme*.

In the last chapter, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Sustainability: we are talking about *MID, Maurice Ile Durable*. We are talking about food security and alternative energy as well. Le projet MID, encore une fois, avant-gardiste avec ce Premier ministre ! Qui ne se souvient pas du *commitment* que le Premier ministre avait pris pour la Vallée de Ferney? Qui ne se souvient pas qui voulait détruire la Vallée de Ferney? Qui a été la personne qui a stoppé la destruction de la Vallée de Ferney pendant qu'eux, ils étaient en train de détruire la biodiversité dans cette vallée? C'est ce Premier ministre encore une fois, visionnaire, avant-gardiste ; c'est ce Premier ministre, c'est ce Parti. Alors qu'eux, ils étaient tout le temps *backward*, tout le temps à côté de la plaque. Et aujourd'hui ils viennent parler, ils posent des questions comme-ci MID, c'était eux, alors qu'ils voulaient détruire la biodiversité. Ils n'avaient même pas la vision. Ce n'est pas qu'ils ne peuvent pas poser des questions, mais vu leurs attitudes c'est comme-ci ils sont plus royalistes que le roi.

M. le président, on est en train de parler d'énergie alternative et là, je voudrais attirer l'attention du *Deputy Prime Minister* sur le *Small Independent Power Producers Programme*.

Aujourd'hui, on a un *SIPP Programme* où on permet aux gens de produire leur propre électricité et de revendre sur le *grid*.

Et je crois que le *Deputy Prime Minister* a dit que les gens revendent à R 20 ou R 25 le KW/h. Je dois dire au *Deputy Prime Minister* que je connais des gens qui sont intéressés d'installer des photovoltaïques ou autres chez eux et qu'ils ne veulent même pas les R 20 ou R 25. Ils sont disposés de le faire même pour R 5 ou R 10 pourvu qu'ils aient quelque chose. Mais je dois dire que le CEB a un plafond.

Je voudrais faire un appel au Deputy Prime Minister that we should extend, we should not refuse people because we say the threshold has already been reached. When we are talking about *MID*, if people are really interested, have the passion to come and install - I have people in my Constituency who are really believers of the *MID* vision of the Prime Minister - who want to invest their own money in a photovoltaic, which you know is very costly, and they don't care if they don't get Rs20 or Rs25 from the CEB. Even Rs5 is alright. They want to participate, but they have been refused. I would like to appeal to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister that we should not close doors. We should have a flexible approach for people who really believe in this vision and want to be part and parcel of this vision.

As we are talking about the 100 MW Coal Power Station, I would like to appeal to Government that again the mistake that was made in putting the Coal Power Station in St. Aubin should not be repeated, because the Deputy Prime Minister has said, in this House, that it takes 18 trucks every single day from the harbour down there. Think about the energy that is wasted! Think about the possibilities, the risk of accidents with these big lorries, and the pollution to the environment! This 100 MW Coal Power Station should be near Port Louis - near the harbour - so that there is not this *va et vient* from one corner to another corner of the island. I would appeal to Government that one of the main criteria, if we are to be in line with *MID* is that this Coal Power Station should be as close as possible to the harbour.

The last thing that I want to talk about, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is at page 40, the paragraph concerning the small planters. I welcome very much. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *comme je crois l'honorable ministre Faugoo, l'honorable ministre Boolell et plusieurs autres personnes, mon ami, l'honorable Cader Sayed-Hossen, on a eu beaucoup de représentations des petits planteurs dont aujourd'hui - l'honorable Bachoo en a parlé aussi - leurs enfants sont des*

professionnels, ils n'ont pas vraiment le temps de s'occuper de leur terre et on a un phénomène indéniable d'abandon de terre de cannes. Au paragraphe 51, le gouvernement dit -

“The recently established Mauritius Cane Industry Authority will as a matter of priority, address the issue of shrinking acreage under cane cultivation. The possibility of managing, on lease, abandoned small planters' lands is being considered.”

Je pense que c'est une très bonne mesure parce qu'on a le concept de *compulsory acquisition* quand il y a des projets d'importance nationale. Maintenant on est en train de parler du concept de *lease* pour que ces terres n'aillent pas à l'abandon d'autant plus que nous savons tous que la canne à sucre a un élément environnemental et aussi c'est mauvais pour un petit pays comme Maurice d'avoir tellement d'arpents qui sont abandonnés. C'est mauvais pour le pays. C'est mauvais pour ces gens-là. Je pense que l'honorable ministre va venir avec un plan en matière de priorité pour louer ces terres pour la production alimentaire qui va non seulement dans la lignée de Maurice Ile Durable, mais aussi dans le projet de sécurité alimentaire. Donc, c'est très, très bien.

M. le président, si on a à parler de tous les paragraphes, on restera là jbeaucoup de temps et ils seront dehors pendant trop de temps. Je crois que j'ai élaboré un peu sur des points que j'ai trouvés intéressants. Il y en a encore beaucoup de choses, mais ce que je voudrais dire, M. le président, c'est que pendant que l'opposition est en train de marcher à reculons, pendant que l'opposition est en train de *move backwards 30 years*, nous, de ce côté de la Chambre, *we are moving forward*. On est en train de *pave the way* pour l'avenir de ce pays, pour l'avenir des jeunes. Dans le concept de la démocratisation de l'économie, la démocratisation politique est l'avenir moderne des jeunes dans ce pays.

We have a Leader, the Leader of the House, the leader of the Labour party, the Leader of this Government who, as a hallmark of a visionary and modern leader, as a strong leader, is taking this country forward in the midst – because we haven't talked about this, I didn't want to go much about the international situation – of international turmoil. They are living in a time warp, as if they don't see anything internationally, as if Mauritius lives in its own time warp, in its own planet with all resources. In the midst of turmoil, we have a strong leader who has not capitulated to the blackmail when the MSM resigned. The blackmail, *le chantage pour faire interférer dans une enquête!* This Prime Minister has held the helm high and has held the reputation of this country high by not capitulating to their blackmail to interfere in an enquiry.

This Prime Minister has made sure that our reputation internationally is not soiled. They have soiled the reputation of this country by going in the way they have gone and by going on that point, Mr Speaker, Sir. Today, they are talking about PNQs and PQs and *tailleur sur mesure* or whatever. But, the question remains: on 29 December who took a gun to your head and asked you to take your pen and sign your name and write: ‘Approved’? Who? I want to know who took a gun to the ex-vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, hon. Jugnauth to his neck and told him: “take your pen now and sign ‘Approved’ and put your name.” That is the point!

(Interruptions)

That is the point! Come and explain!

(Interruptions)

Come and explain to this House! If they were not agreeable to *le scandale du siècle*, nobody was holding a gun to their head! If they were really sincere in what they are saying – but we know they are not - he should have resigned then. There is something called ‘a resignation letter’, unless somebody was holding a gun to his head. If he did not want that, he should not have signed. When you have signed, it means you approved. He even wrote ‘Approved’. Unless there was a *fantôme, je ne sais pas, ‘bye looké’ quelque part ou peut-être une marraine qui était en train de point a gun to his neck !*

(Interruptions)

Maybe that was the case! *Mais, aujourd’hui, M. le président, ce sont ces gens-là qui ont terni la réputation de l’île Maurice et c’est ce Premier ministre qui a upheld la réputation de ce pays en prenant tous les risques qu’il faut prendre. Mais c’est ça le hallmark d’un leader. This is the hallmark of a true leader whose visionary is strong and who is looking towards the future and l’avenir de ce pays et de ces jeunes.* And today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are very proud to have a Prime Minister who is mobilising all energies of this country and we make an appeal to everyone, those who are there, to join hands with us, to shape the country’s future and to help in moving this nation forward.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with these words, I congratulate and commend this motion. Thank you.

(6.28 p.m.)

Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal): M. le président, le lundi 16 avril dernier, la Présidente de la République par intérim, Madame Monique Ohsan-Bellepeau,

nous a présenté le programme national pour la période 2012-2015 du gouvernement Parti Travailleiste-PMSD, une intervention qui s'est appesantie sur l'importance d'une croissance économique stable pour assurer la prospérité de la nation.

Ce programme correspond parfaitement à l'environnement social et économique dans lequel nous évoluons actuellement – un environnement caractérisé par un vacillement de l'ordre économique mondial avec la crise en Europe, le printemps arabe, l'émergence de nouvelles puissances telles que l'Inde et la Chine et le tout dans un village global soudainement rétréci avec les nouvelles technologies.

Alors que le discours programme fait appel à une rupture de nos vieilles habitudes et jette les jalons pour l'île Maurice du troisième millénaire, l'autre côté de la Chambre, enraciné dans le passé, pense que l'avenir se trouve dans le rétroviseur et ne trouve pas mieux comme programme que de nous renvoyer à l'an 2000.

Comme disait le Président Barack Obama lors d'un discours au Congrès Américain le 8 septembre dernier, I quote -

“People who are watching us right now, they don't care about politics. They have real life concerns. Those of us here today can't solve all of our nation's problems. We can make a difference. There are steps we can take right now to improve people's lives. We all remember Abraham Lincoln, as the leader who saved our union. But in the middle of a civil war, he was also a leader who looked to the future. A leader who mobilised government to build the transcontinental railroad; launch the National Academy of Sciences and set up the first land grant colleges and leaders of both parties have followed the example he set.”

Les démarches qui ont été entreprises par le 16^{ème} Président Américain ressemblent énormément à celles de notre Premier ministre. Le projet métro léger, l'accent sur l'éducation tertiaire et la scolarité gratuite.

Lorsque le Président Obama parle de *both parties*, il fait référence aux Démocrates et Républicains, c'est-à-dire, gouvernement et l'Opposition.

Que voyons-nous aujourd'hui dans notre auguste l'Assemblée ? L'Opposition préfère jouer aux abonnés absents en prônant le boycott des débats du discours programme. D'ailleurs, M. le président, l'Opposition a toujours brillé par son absence aux grands rendez-vous de l'histoire de notre pays.

Si on jette un regard transversal du cheminement social et économique de Maurice qui a été façonné par le Parti Travailleiste et ses partenaires : depuis la lutte pour l'indépendance, le *Welfare State*, le transport gratuit aux seniors et aux étudiants, le décollage économique et numérique et bientôt les infrastructures les plus modernes telles que le métro léger et le Harbour Bridge. Durant tout ce parcours, le MMM et le MSM ont été absents et le seront toujours, sauf dans l'opposition.

Et pourtant, tous ces responsables de l'opposition ont déjà été aux commandes du pays pendant un moment et ils ont laissé un souvenir amer à la population mauricienne qu'ils disent vouloir défendre aujourd'hui ; comme, par exemple, une croissance décevante, le déchirement de la population à travers des dérives sectaires. On se souvient de l'épisode Créole-démon, les milliers de victimes de la vente à la barre et l'affaire du billet de banque de R 20 qui rappelle l'époque des empires tyranniques entre autres.

Le programme 2012-2015, M. le président, s'adresse à tous les mauriciens indépendamment de leur situation sociale, leur croyance, leur préférence et leur talent. Parce que le pays doit permettre à chacun de forger son avenir, parce que le mérite et l'effort doivent permettre de surmonter les préjugés et les complexes.

Dans un monde bouleversé par une crise économique sans précédent, l'unité est notre arme principale pour faire face aux défis et pour dessiner un nouveau modèle de progrès. Depuis 2005, il y a un pacte de confiance entre le gouvernement et la population. Le programme 2012-2015 renouvelle ce pacte et jette les bases pour ce nouveau modèle de développement.

Le discours programme félicite le gouvernement dirigé par notre Premier ministre, le Dr Navin Ramgoolam, d'avoir pu depuis 2006, attirer plus de *Foreign Direct Investment* de ces 40 dernières années. D'ici 2015, 10% du montant des investissements des projets publics de grande envergure seront financés par le FDI. On peut en déduire qu'il est nécessaire de rassembler voire de renforcer le partenariat public-privé pour gagner ensemble le pari du développement.

Le développement durable est une nécessité pour notre pays. La mise en place d'une politique de développement durable va favoriser l'investissement dans les secteurs d'avenir et entrainera l'émergence d'un nouveau modèle de croissance plus respectueux des générations futures. Cette nouvelle croissance permettra au pays de lutter efficacement contre le réchauffement climatique, d'assurer sa transition énergétique et de créer de nouveaux pôles de développement.

Un des projets phares du discours programme demeure le développement de l'Océan Economy. L'élargissement de notre centre d'intérêt économique depuis la terre pour couvrir 2,3 millions de kilomètres carrés, représente un formidable défi. Soudainement, Maurice est de la même taille que la France, l'Allemagne, l'Italie, l'Espagne et la Grande Bretagne réunis.

Le concept de l'Etat Océan entraînera une croissance économique durable, l'emploi et l'innovation. Les métiers de demain sont, donc, connus et nous pourrons donner aux jeunes les moyens de les connaître et de les exercer. Tout indique que notre zone économique bleue sera sous peu en plein essor. Nous souhaitons la mise en place d'un plan d'action pour une politique maritime intégrée.

M. le président, la démocratisation de l'économie, vision de notre Premier ministre pour une île moderne, se poursuit. Ce processus ne se fait pas du jour au lendemain mais progressivement. Un palier important est l'accès au savoir par la démocratisation de l'accès à l'internet.

Avant 2005, l'internet n'était pas accessible au grand public. Aujourd'hui, le gouvernement s'apprête à lancer un programme national de déploiement du très haut débit aux quatre coins du pays à travers une connexion d'au moins 1 mégabit par seconde dans chaque foyer d'ici 2015. L'objectif du gouvernement est de faire de Maurice une île intelligente à travers une bonne connectivité en utilisant une bande passante de qualité. Le gouvernement compte en effet faire du secteur des TIC's l'une de ses priorités nationales où connectivité, croissance et développement sont les maîtres-mots de réussite.

M. le président, c'est sous le gouvernement du parti travailliste et PMSD que la cyber Ile Maurice a pris réellement naissance, et non pas sur les terres émanant du *deal* d'Illovo sous l'ancien régime MMM/MSM sur lesquelles a été construite la cyber cité d'Ebène. Ce gouvernement propose à chaque famille mauricienne l'ouverture sur le monde à travers l'internet et va plus loin en installant des bornes wifi dans des lieux stratégiques dans l'île afin d'offrir un accès gratuit à un maximum de citoyens.

Des ordinateurs Braille seront mis à la disposition de nos mal-voyants, des formations gratuites en informatique seront dispensées dans les Elderly Day Care Centers pour les seniors et des tarifs internet réduits aux étudiants du SC et du HSC. C'est évident que ce gouvernement ne veut pas créer une fracture numérique et un développement à deux vitesses.

Le Premier ministre disait : ‘ *faudé pas qui quand le course larguer, ou en dehors Champs de Mars*’. Il maintient sa promesse que les fruits du développement appartiennent à tous indistinctement.

M. le président, en voyant l’absence et l’effritement de l’opposition, on peut constater que ce gouvernement a conquis le cœur des mauriciens. Le peuple mauricien dans toute sa sagesse voit juste et a compris que son destin se trouve entre les mains du gouvernement actuel dirigé par le Premier ministre de notre république, le docteur Navin Ramgoolam. L’engagement de notre Premier ministre est sincère. Il est un vrai *leader*, un vrai patriote. Le discours 2012-2015 est le tremplin pour l’île Maurice du nouveau millénaire, plus prospère, plus juste, plus soudée que jamais et plus propre. L’heure est maintenant au travail assidu comme cela a toujours été le cas au sein du gouvernement. M. le président, laissons l’opposition piroter dans la désillusion, dans l’immobilisme ou plutôt dans la nostalgie de l’an 2000. Le peuple n’est pas dupe.

Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

(6.41 p.m.)

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr S. Faugoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me at the very outset to congratulate the hon. Third Member of the Constituency of Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, hon. Mrs Kalyanee Juggoo who proposed the motion on the Government Programme 2012-2015 and also for her brilliant intervention last week.

May I also seize this opportunity to congratulate the acting President of the Republic, Her Excellency Monique Ohsan-Bellepeau, who graciously addressed the Assembly on the Government Programme 2012-2015 on Monday the 16 April last.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is worth underlining that she was the first woman to hold the office of the President of the Labour Party, the First Lady vice-President of the Republic of Mauritius and she is now acting as President of the Republic. It is no coincidence as the Labour Party has always advocated the emancipation and greater participation of woman in the public affairs. No wonder that the first councillor ever was elected under the banner of the Labour Party and also the first woman Cabinet Minister hailed from the Labour Party. So, congratulations again to Her Excellency Monique Ohsan-Bellepeau and also to the Prime Minister.

I also express my congratulations to the Prime Minister for his wisdom to prorogue the Assembly in March of this year and for his courageous decision to come up with a new Government Programme. Indeed with the emergence of new threats and also opportunities, this new programme is well warranted. I must say here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Prime Minister rightly deserves the congratulations after what we witnessed on the 01 May of this year. The Prime Minister once again created an affinity with the population, not only one section of the population, but all sections of the population from all walks of life. They all assembled to give a push to the present Government, the Alliance Labour and PMSD and especially to the leader, the Prime Minister of this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Labour Party meeting on 01 May this year was no ordinary meeting because it was more like a poll, a referendum, if I may put it this way. In fact, a deeper insight reveals its importance and its impact on issues of national importance. The mammoth turnout at the midterm meeting when a government is expected to be unpopular and that too coupled with the resignation of the President of the Republic and that of a vice-Prime Minister and his party from Government is bound to convey a deeper and meaningful message to the nation. It was not a meeting where we can talk only of the crowd, of the numbers present on that day. It has, in fact, far-reaching significance.

Through its zeal, enthusiasm and presence in great numbers at the meeting, the population sent several signals. First, they came to say 'yes' to the decision of the Prime Minister to prorogue the National Assembly because the National Assembly was prorogued before 01 May. It conveyed its renewed trust on the leadership of the Prime Minister. It agreed to a new Government Programme and endorsed same. It renewed the trust in the Labour and PMSD Alliance. It was a real plebiscite for the Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

On the other hand, the people who gathered at the meeting in Vacoas on the 01 May, this year, also clearly condemned the disgraceful political manoeuvring of the then Head of State from Réduit. It was a clear signal given to him. It condemned the fake remake. It rejected the leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth and Bérenger. It rejected an alliance of Johnny, maybe J&B now, I understand. From Johnny it has gone down to J&B, *pagla mamou, pakpak, razoir* and now over and on top *Bye Looké*.

(Interruptions)

'*Ti cretin*' is out; he does not form part of the alliance. It condemned the practice of cheap politics based on character assassination. It rejected the zigzag adopted for so long by hon. Bérenger. He was the one who qualified the Med Point affair as '*scandale du siècle*'. He was the one who campaigned left, right and centre down the country from the north to the south going everywhere and putting the blame on the Jugnauth, be it Pravind Jugnauth or Sir Anerood Jugnauth. He even said: *zot mem aste, zot mem vender*. Now look at the zigzag. What he is doing now, it is another slogan: *nou mem met accusation, nou mem defan*. So, he is the one who came forward to accuse them. Which is which, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? It is now crystal clear that their masks have fallen and the population knows about the agenda. They have failed to understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the population is not interested in trivial matters, petty politics, character assassination campaigns or the protection of someone's ill-gotten wealth. The population is interested with what the future holds for them and their families. The population is more than convinced that only this Government holds the key for a bright future for the nation. Now it is clear that the population considers the remake as stillborn, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the world is fast changing. Globalisation is a reality. The cure for yesterday's economic ailments no longer stands the tests of time. New challenges and new trends are emerging. New forces are at play. Statesmanship is no trial and error game. New problems need novel solutions. This is clearly evident with the economic decline of European countries like Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain. Since 2005, the world has experienced successive crises and the repercussions are far reaching and Mauritius, as a small vulnerable island, is not spared as our main market is Europe and also our tourist industry depends strongly on Europe.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, despite the dismal global economic situation, Mauritius has displayed substantial economic resilience since 2005. This is largely attributed to two main factors mainly a strong leadership and the right mix of policies, both economic and social.

We, Members of this august Parliament, are the chosen few who carry the most humble mantle of service to the nation. We have taken the oath to lead our countrymen through thick and thin for a better tomorrow. We, on this side of the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, measure the hope and faith pinned on us by the population. We are accountable to the present and future generations. We shall stand at the altar of history and we shall be judged for our acts and

omissions. Government Programme 2012/15 is a programme of opportunity, a programme to take Mauritius to upward mobility and greater equality, where the weakest will have the same opportunity as the strongest, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our nation has, in the recent months, lived the darkest moments of its history since independence. Our democratic institutions have never been threatened as in the recent few months. The then President of the Republic, in league with the Leader of the Opposition, conspired to overthrow the democratically elected Government of the country against all established rules, practices and conventions, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The House will note that the Head of the State had taken the oath to be the guardian of our Constitution and the institutions, yet he conspired to jeopardise and undermine the same institutions which are the hallmarks of our democratic system of Government, in particular the principles of separation of powers, the independence of institutions, namely the DPP, the Police Force, the Judiciary, the ICAC and the Electoral Commissioner's Office, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. He, with his new partner, had publicly expressed their ill intentions to overthrow the Government by foul means. The then President was, in league with the Leader of the Opposition, who had decades before, stated that his party, the MMM, would take the reins of power: *'avec ou sans les élections, 'marche lors cadave si bizin marche lors cadave pou prend pouvoir.'* This is what he said.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they had sent their powerbrokers to buy the conscience of our Parliamentarians on this side of the House, but they failed. They made a mistake. Parliamentarians, on this side of the House, are faithful to our leader, the Prime Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We are all behind him and we are all wired to his vision for a modern Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Constitution of our country would have been sullied and democracy would have suffered its biggest blow. Fortunately, our institutions are mature and our citizens are enlightened. The nation outdid the coup of the Opposition and that of the President. In the conspiracy against the State, they relentlessly attacked our institutions namely the DPP, as I said, ICAC, the Electoral Commission, the Police Force and even the Judiciary by extension, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Such an attitude was not expected from someone who has served the country for 16 years as Prime Minister and nine years as President of the Republic. This is highly unbecoming, of somebody holding such a post, repugnant, reprehensible and condemnable, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Very often, we forget about the oath we take on assumption of our office, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Let me refer to the third Schedule of the Constitution and what was the oath of allegiance that the President had taken. If I may read –

“I, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, do solemnly affirm that I will faithfully execute the Office of President and will, to the best of my ability, without favour or prejudice, defend the Constitution and the institutions of democracy and the rule of law, ensure that the fundamental rights are protected and the unity of the diverse Mauritian nation maintained and strengthened.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this was what he did when he was sworn in as President. But how he ended up? He ended up as Leader of the Opposition from Réduit, the way he behaved.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on this score, he should have been a role model to create *un élan national* and to muster all forces to move the nation forward. He should have been a role model for the present and future generations and to the youth in particular. Instead he chose to put the whole nation at stake in the interest of his empire and to save his son. He chose the wrong path and has become a symbol of disgrace, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. He dared to attack the DPP, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The office of the DPP is a constitutional post. The DPP is not answerable to anyone, to any body, not even the Executive, not even the Judiciary, nor the Parliament, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. He decides on his own deliberate judgment. Our Judicial functioning and the functioning of the institutions around the Judiciary, the office of the DPP, the Police Force is an example, is a window of democratic and independent institutions in our country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the region and for the world, I must say. When he attacked the DPP, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my humble view, he is also sending a signal to the Judiciary, because the DPP is bound to decide either way, either he says there is no evidence to prosecute in any case for that matter or there is evidence to prosecute. In this case, the enquiry is not complete, the file has not yet been sent to the DPP’s Office and yet not only Sir Anerood Jugnauth, but hon. Bérenger also attacked the DPP, they put him on guard, they said: “Be careful! *Attention!*” So, what they are saying - in fact, in my reading, it is through the DPP to the Judiciary: “If ever this file is sent to you, the Judiciary for trial, so be careful you too.” This is a case which cannot be prosecuted for the simple fact, because it is Pravind Jugnauth. They think that the country belongs to them, that they can manipulate the institutions, they have done it in the past. Who voted a law overnight to close ECO? When was it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? This is what they are trying to do. They have

said when they will come to power, they will see to it that ICAC is close, ICAC is done with, this is what they say. They might even be thinking to do away with the post of DPP in a country like ours, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. They also attacked the Electoral Commissioner, not only outside this House, but also you will recall when the debate was going on, on the Local Government last year, hon. Bérenger came forward and said: "The Bill was illegal." What happened? You have never heard neither from the press, from any quarters today. It was such a motion. He made a mountain out of this issue that it was illegal, but the Bill was voted. He had gone to consult the President of the Republic, we all know before coming to Parliament. But the same Bill was passed, the same Bill today is an Act of Parliament and the elections are going to be held under that very law which Bérenger said was illegal, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. During that debate, in this very House, they put in questions on the integrity of the Electoral Commissioner, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when, in fact, not only the Electoral Commission's Office, but even the incumbent is a reference, not only in the region, but I must say in the world Sir. He is very often solicited for his professional and technical advice. I know him personally, he is a man of integrity, he has proved himself for so many years in that institution, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Sir Anerood Jugnauth has become a symbol of disgrace. He no longer commands respect and will go down in history as a traitor who has served his own interests, his son's interests and his families' interests before the national interests, that is, before the interests of the people of this country.

The whole nation felt threatened and reacted as never before. They stopped the *coup*, they seized the symbolical Labour Day to express their feeling of disgust to the Opposition and support to the Government. We did not hold dozens of meetings like they did to convince people to come to our meeting. They did it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We simply appealed to their sense of patriotism and the result is obvious, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Students of politics know that any Government, during its midterm, has for the common good, unfortunately, made enough enemies. We did expect to gather such an enthusiastic and responsive crowd, but, in spite of being in our midterm, our public meeting was strong as never before. And what a crowd of Mauritians of all creeds and classes and from all strata of our cosmopolitan society! Of course, they came to support the party in power and our Prime Minister and also to say "no" to those cowards who tried to orchestrate a political coup. What a reason or pretext to resign from the presidency, to serve the poor people, he says. He is

presenting himself as a saviour, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The real fact is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that he committed a monumental blunder by doing politics from the State House at Réduit. And he was booted out of Réduit. Today, he is pretending that by design, *par calcul* that he resigned to come and serve the people of this country. But this is not so. He was forced to take the exit, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It was after the conference of the hon. Prime Minister where he challenged him to come and say publicly whether he is doing politics or he is just the President of the Republic, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. He had no choice. He had to go. In fact, as I said, he was kicked out. So, he cannot come and pretend, as if he resigned for a cause, as if he came to save the country from doom when there is no doom as such. How can he pretend to save the people when he himself, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and his partner brought the country on the brink of the economic precipice in 2005 and leaving the country with a *certificat d'urgence économique*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Yet, during their tenure, the sun was shining, there was no global crisis, no energy crisis, no soaring food prices and they failed lamentably and the population sanctioned them well for their poor performance in 2005, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is always monstrous when the mind does not follow the tongue. The nation has already removed their masks and they now stand naked in their lies, *machiavélique* and obscure plans.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a responsible Opposition is, in fact, an alternative Government with a shadow Cabinet, un *gouvernement en alternance*; as such they are expected to fully grasp the challenges of the day and to propose alternative proposals on issues of national importance, if at all they have one. This current debate on the Government Programme provides them with an opportunity to do so. In fact, the Prime Minister challenges them to come and debate: to come, and we will have a vote; you want to put us in minority, come, you have a chance! What we are witnessing today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is a bankrupt Opposition, an Opposition devoid of ideas and a sterile one, that is unable to assume its legitimate responsibility. While we lead, others are bent upon to sow the seeds of discord; while we build institutions, others choose to play politics with them; while we strive to serve the nation, others stoop to serve their sons, their kins or their legacy.

Today, this House bears testimony of those who have run away from debates of national importance. History will recall them as turncoats, recoiling and creeping in their selfish cocoons. What a way to serve the people by hiding from the reality, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Our priority is nation-building, their priority is Med Point building. Our role is to lead and deliver, theirs is to

organise confusion and to create a psychosis of doom. For them, everything is dark, dreadful and drab, for us it is glorious and graceful, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The House may wish to know how Pravind Jugnauth described the attitude and behaviour of Bérenger who was running away from such responsibility in 2010.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to quote some extracts from the speech of hon. Pravind Jugnauth on Government Programme 2010-2015 when he was vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development. He started by saying, and I quote, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir –

“I wish to congratulate the hon. Prime Minister for his re-election at the helm of the country and for the dedicated way he is conducting the affairs of the nation. I also congratulate the hon. Leader of the Opposition in absentia *parce qu’il est bien à sa place.*”

This is what he had to say.

“Le moment est solennel parce que c’est l’avenir de notre pays qui est au centre des débats, c’est la vision d’un gouvernement fort et avant-gardiste, avec un *leadership* fort – c’était qui ? – que je défends avec beaucoup de fierté ».

This is what he said on the Prime Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I think I must read it again -

« (...) c’est la vision d’un gouvernement fort et avant-gardiste, avec un *leadership* fort que je défends avec beaucoup de fierté. »

But the leader was not leader only since 2010. He was leader of the party since 20 years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. He was Prime Minister between 1995 and 2000 and again Prime Minister between 2005-2010; elected again in 2010 and election is for sure in 2015, and again he will come back, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Now, I’ll quote another extract, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir –

“At the same time, the Government Programme reaffirms the environment friendly development approach in line with the Prime Minister’s vision of *Maurice Ile Durable*. The House will recall that even when I was at the ranks of the Opposition, I had supported the Prime Minister’s initiatives.”

Where is he now? Is he still supporting the vision of the Prime Minister?

“I fully share the vision of the hon. Prime Minister as our environmental assets are the only treasures that we possess and we must preserve them at all costs.”

This is what he had to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. What is more important, I quote –

“*Tout d’abord, M. le président*, what a shame, the Opposition is absent for this debate and they have signified their intension of not participating in the completion of the debates *pour les discours programmes*. They are not assuming their responsibility. In fact, they are paid from public funds.”

This is what he said -

“They are supposed to be defending the population at large and to be voicing their views with regard to that important *discours programme* and we do not see them here.”

What is he doing today? He has joined the same Leader of the Opposition and he is absent today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Maybe, someone should come with a motion to reduce their salary. In fact, we should think aloud, maybe we should bring a law because it exists in other jurisdictions, in other countries, if someone is absent for so many hours without any reason. They have been voted to do exactly what they are not doing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

He says –

“Alors, le MMM revient à la charge pour s’attaquer cette fois-ci à des institutions aussi sérieuses et crédibles comme la Commission Electorale et the *Electoral Supervisory Commission* dont la responsabilité est d’organiser des élections et de veiller à ce que ces élections se tiennent dans une atmosphère de *free and fairness*. »

Today, they are attacking not only the Electoral Commissioner’s Office, not only the Electoral Commissioner, the Police Force, the ICAC, the DPP and the Judiciary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these same people. In less than two years, this is what he had to say on the leadership, on the Prime Minister and on the Government Programme.

And today, in less than two years, because of personal interest, vested interest, Med Point and family affairs, this is what he is doing today. It is exactly the opposite of what he was saying in 2010, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

So, it is not only hon. Bérenger at the end of the day, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but also hon. Pravind Jugnauth and his team members who speak one language when they are on this side of the House and another when they move to the other side. Like I said last time, there is a saying in Parliamentary language which goes as follows –

“Where you stand depends on where you sit.”

So, they were here, they had one language; they are there and all has changed today. Same people, no conviction, no interest for the country, no interest for the population! It is only their interest, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. *Quelle démagogie et quelle malhonnêteté intellectuelle, M. le président!*

M. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government Programme 2012-2015 is our plan of action, our roadmap for the rest of our Assembly term and beyond; a real commitment to deliver, a mandate by the people to deliver a renewed set of ambitions. We want the nation to move forward, whatever challenges may emerge, together we will turn these challenges into opportunities and we will modernise the country and move it along the high income country group. We want to create further opportunities for upward mobility and we want to prevent the currently observed downward mobility in countries that are badly affected by the different crises. It is being observed that in so many developed countries for the first time ever, we have a first generation, as far as our memories go, to face a future less promising than their parents did. This is what we are trying to avoid in this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We have maintained, if not consolidated, the priorities that we formulated in the Government Programme 2005-2010. Indeed, over the next three years and beyond, we will build on the firm platform that has been laid over the last seven years to create a more prosperous and fairer society for one and all. We will continue to be guided in these actions by the philosophical values that we have always advocated: progressive politics, *de mettre l'être humain au centre de développement*. Economic success is only meaningful if it leads to improvements in the quality of life for all in a sustainable way. To nurture a more inclusive, plural and cohesive society based on human dignity, equality of treatment, economic efficiency, and social justice, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Government Programme shows our determination to consolidate the policies and measures that we have initiated since 2005 in the agro industrial sector. The House is aware that this sector has been confronted with unprecedented crises in succession. Energy crisis, fuel and food crisis, food price hike, dismantlement of the EU Sugar Protocol and the massive 36% drastic cut in the sugar price. These crises have nonetheless served as a wake-up call to review our policies and programmes, and I am proud to say that we have, under the strong leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, turned these challenges into opportunities, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We'll pursue our efforts to modernise and professionalise the agro-industrial sector and to transform the sugar industry into a sugarcane cluster. Already we have taken bold and deep

measures to reduce the cost of production of cane and sugar, to increase the revenue of planters, to enhance the yield of cane and sugar, thereby improving the viability of the sugarcane sector. Global cess has been reduced from Rs519 m. to Rs287 m. where each small planter from the 20,000 that we have, is getting Rs700 extra per tonne of sugar, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The six cess funded institutions have been merged into one, the MCIA. A thorough project is in progress for the derocking, mechanical land preparation and irrigation set up of lands belonging to small planters. I am proud to say that we have satisfied all the key performance indicators and this good performance has enabled Mauritius to benefit from the full *tranche* under the accompanying support measures. We have also embarked on an ambitious programme to enhance our food production, food sufficiency and our food security. We will further consolidate the actions taken to reduce our imports and dependence on imports.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are confident that we can accomplish the task ahead and to steer the nation successfully in the future despite the looming challenges. We have a track record of good performance under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister. The performance since 2005 is recognised not only by citizens of this country, but also by eminent international personalities and institutions. With your permission, if I may quote some of them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim said, and I quote –

“I do not select the best country for the Mo Ibrahim Index of good governance, it is done on the basis of a set of indicators that are accepted internationally and the indicators cover such disciplines as good governance, poverty alleviations, social security, environment, education and health.”

To quote again professor Stiglitz, on the Mauritian miracle, if I may, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I quote –

“Suppose someone wants to describe a small country that provided free education through university for all of its citizens, transportation for school children and free health care, including heart surgery for all, you might suspect that such a country is either phenomenally rich or on the fast track to fiscal crisis, but Mauritius, a small island nation off the east coast of Africa, is neither particularly rich nor on its way to budgetary ruin. Nonetheless, it has spent the last decades successfully building a diverse economy, a democratic political system and a strong social safety net. Many countries not least the US could learn from its experience.”

It is not us on this side of this House who are saying this; it is not the hon. Prime Minister; we are not boasting ourselves. This is an outsider, an American saying this on Mauritius. Can someone deny this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? These statements on our economic performance, on our good governance have not been made by ordinary people, as I said, but by international institutions and by eminent personalities of international repute. Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the success of our reform initiatives is also visible in various other areas, including macroeconomic conditions, besides creation of fiscal space, reduction in economic vulnerabilities, increase in *per capita* income and lowering of unemployment rate. The country has also been able to improve its international rankings over the years. This is witnessed by so many international and global reports and we all know about this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, history will record that under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister we have assumed our responsibilities fully and have succeeded where others, endowed with plentiful resources, have failed. We have, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, transformed challenges into opportunities. More importantly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have moved the nation away from the brink of the *précipice économique* that was left to us by the MMM/MSM in 2005 and introduced bold and deep measures to produce a strong growth and economic resilience over the last seven years. In this arduous task, we have left no stone unturned to advance social justice and economic democratisation. We are strongly animated by the conviction that sustainable growth can only be achieved where there is substantial democratic space and effective institutions. We will ensure that the institutions are fully protected and we will stand in the way of anyone who seeks to pervert these institutions, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This Government enjoys an enlightened leadership in the person of the hon. Prime Minister, a Statesman *hors pair*, I must say, whose reputation has reached the shores of Africa, Europe and beyond.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today this House bears testimony of those who have run away from debates of national importance. History will recall them as turncoats, recoiling and creeping in their selfish cocoons.

Since their disgraceful exit from Government on a shady deal, they stormed hell to destroy this Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Let us not mention the prices tagged to names worthy of an auction sale. The son failed, the father descended in the arena. He, too, failed. The son wept, mummy could not help. All of them meekly followed the fox to its den for a final sacrifice, I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

In the turmoil, we never lost sight of our responsibility and our mission. The population is weary of petty and selfish politics. The population needs a Government that cares, understands and pre-empt its problems and one that brings solutions - a Government that builds the future.

I must state here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that in any democratic system of Government, the Opposition has certain responsibilities and obligations to discharge towards the State and the population. Democratic Governance implies a responsible and constructive Opposition. They are a critical partner in nation-building.

More than ever, with the unprecedented crises, we would have expected the Opposition to stand together, to look together in the same direction to better brace the emerging challenges! Unfortunately, I must say this is not what the Mauritian population has witnessed so far! It is never too late for the Opposition to be more responsible, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! On this note, our Opposition parties have failed miserably. They have, I concede, excelled in character assassination of their opponents.

I have not lost hope in the Opposition yet, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am confident that with time, they will rise from the culture of Opposition to a culture of patriotism, to a culture of positive attitude and thus contribute in our common mission of nation-building. I am sure that in future, they will not change their political position to suit their temporary and newly found partners.

The Hansard bears testimony to their vacillating, incoherent, colourable, immature and short term positions. I am sincerely hoping one day that they will see light and inspire our youth who have been disillusioned by the lack of commitment of the Opposition parties, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Labour Party was born in the pangs of pain and has relentlessly stood on the side of the downtrodden for nearly a century now. We have never compromised, never trampled on our principles, never betrayed the trust, the faith, hopes and expectations of our people and we will never do so, come what may, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

With these words, I thank you.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the debates.

Dr. Jeetah rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

The Deputy Speaker: I now suspend the sitting for one hour and fifteen minutes for dinner.

At 7.26 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 8.52 p.m with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

PUBLIC BILLS

Second Reading

THE UNIVERSITE DES MASCAREIGNES BILL (NO. III OF 2012)

Order for Second Reading read

The Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (Dr. R. Jeetah): Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Université Des Mascareignes Bill (No. III of 2012) be read a second time.

It is my distinct pleasure to present a Bill, a Bill to create the fourth university in this great little country of ours which has, I must say, relentlessly moved forward to become a country that the world is beginning to reckon with and is now placed amongst some of the best performing nations in this part of the world. Thank you, Prime Minister, for this opportunity to create a new breed of professionals to carry forward your vision to make of Mauritius a modern country where each and every child of this country can achieve the Mauritian dream.

It has been the deep rooted philosophy of the Labour Party, which is now fully supported by our ally the PMSD, to view education as a means for emancipation of the individual and advancement of the community and the nation. This is why throughout our history, education has been one of our highest priorities.

The House may recall that Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam never lost any opportunity to exhort the population to invest in education. He pursued a deliberate policy of expanding primary, secondary and tertiary education. He showed incredible foresight by introducing free education to give equal chances to all Mauritian children.

In his speech on the University, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam has stated in 1968 that I quote –

“The most urgent task to which we must all direct our attention is the adaptation of our educational institutions to the changing needs of society. Our salvation truly lies in

educating and training our men and women in such a way that they are better equipped to face the great battles of life”.

The Labour Party has contributed a lot to institution building in education since independence. Most, if not all, the higher educational institutions were established during the mandate of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and Dr. Navin Ramgoolam and I wish to enumerate these institutions, Mr Speaker, Sir. The University of Mauritius, the Mauritius Institute of Education, the Mauritius College of the Air, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and, as I said, under the mandate of the present Prime Minister, we have set up the *Institut Supérieur des Technologies (IST)* in 1998, the Fashion Design Institute (FDI) in 2008, the University of Technology (UTM) in 2000, and the MITD in 2009. The Open University Act was voted in 2010 and now we are coming up with the *Université des Mascareignes*. We must also not forget that it was under the mandate of this current Government that the SSR Medical School, the DY Patil Post Graduate Medical School were set up and, this year, the Ana Medical School has been established.

This Government, under the leadership of our Prime Minister, has set the objective of making tertiary education accessible to all and to decentralise tertiary education facilities. With only one institution at the time of the country's independence, today this sector counts 71 institutions with a mix of 11 public institutions and 60 private institutions, employing over 2,700 full time staff.

Mr Speaker, Sir, within the last two years, since the setting up of a separate Ministry for Tertiary Education, nine new private tertiary education institutions have been set up and the number of programmes has increased to 770. The Gross Tertiary Enrolment rate, which measures the total tertiary enrolment as a percentage of the population aged 20-24 years has increased from 41.4% in 2008-2009 to 46% in 2011.

I shall now, Mr Speaker, Sir, discuss the rationale for setting up for the *Université des Mascareignes*. The proposed Bill forms part of the overall long term strategy of this Government to make tertiary education accessible to all students and to build the foundation of a strong knowledge economy.

We cannot determine the need for tertiary education only on the basis of the number of students leaving secondary schools. Tertiary education is linked to many other factors. According to the Human Development Report 2011, empirical evidence internationally shows a

strong correlation between the number of graduates per 100,000 population, enrolment rate at tertiary level and the per capita GDP and the Human Development Index. In this respect, I wish to comment on a table from UNESCO Institute of Statistics for the year 2011. I have heard members talking about education in terms of numbers and so on and so forth. I need to spend a few minutes on this table. I have a table here which indicates the country, the GTER (Gross Tertiary Enrolment Rate) which is a parameter used by UNESCO and other institutions, the number of students per 100,000 population, the per capita income in US dollars and the HDI ranking (Human Development Index). I need to take a few examples, for instance in India there is an enrolment rate of 12% and 1,578 students per 100,000 population and the GDP per capita stands at \$1,192 and its HDI, that is, its (Human Development Index) stands at 0.547 and the country is ranked 134 in the world. In South Africa the enrolment rate stands at 15% and the GDP per capita stands at \$5733 and its HDI stands at 0.619 and it is ranked 123.

In Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, our enrolment rate currently stands at around 46% . The figure I have from UNESCO relates to a figure of 45% and the number of students that we have per 100,000 population stands at 3,410. Our GDP per capita according to this table stood at \$7,600 which is much higher today and our HDI (Human Development Index) stands at 0.728 and we are ranked 77. I can take a few more examples. For example, in Australia, there is an enrolment rate of 76% and they have 5,554 students per 100,000 population and their GDP per capita is \$42,131 and their HDI stands at 0.929 and they rank second in the world. I also have data for other countries, as I have said, such as the UK, Finland, USA and so on and so forth. This is proof enough that it is critical for this country to increase the gross tertiary enrolment rate and this is what we are doing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is in this context that the Université des Mascareignes Bill is being introduced today to establish a fourth University which will be constituted by bringing together two fine institutions, if I may say so. They are two institutions that have matured today and these institutions are the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management (SDIM) and the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie (IST)*, which have proven themselves over the last ten years or so.

This University will have its own specificity. Whereas most of our existing Institutions follow the Anglo-Saxon system, that is, the English teaching medium of instruction, an English system, emanating either from the US or the United Kingdom, this new institution will incorporate a dimension of the French system of education and enable us to open up to the

region. We have many students who have studied in the French system and this University will cater for these students as well. Students from the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie* and the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management have no problems of employment as they are readily employed in sectors where there is a dearth of technical skills. The new University will provide them with the opportunity to upgrade their skills, move from diploma to degree, postgraduate and even up to postdoctoral level at some stage and become professionals in their own right.

The Swami Dayanand Institute of Management was set up in 1995 with the primary objective of training middle-level technicians at supervisory and management level in the services sector. With an initial four programmes and a cohort of 80 students, today it offers 10 programmes and enlists 547 students, studying IT, Business Administration, Accounting & Finance, Banking & Financial Services, Human Resource Management, Marketing, amongst others.

The *Institut Supérieur de Technologie* started in September 1998 with a first cohort of 68 students and 3 programmes designed to respond to the needs of the industry. It now has 326 students, who are following courses leading to the *Diplome Universitaire Supérieur de Technologie (DUST)* in *Génie Electrique et Informatique Industrielle, Maintenance et Automatisme Industriels, Génie Civil and Informatique Appliquée*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, both institutions have benefitted from a '*Protocole de Collaboration et de Partenariat*' which was first signed in 1999 for a period of three years between the University of Limoges and the Technical School Management Trust Fund. The protocol has subsequently been renewed. The parties concerned are now working on a new protocol to be signed with the *Université des Mascareignes*.

The Protocol provides for placement and supervision of students for industrial attachments, staff development and training, upgrading of qualifications, research work and setting up and updating of course programmes in line with the 'Licence-Master-Doctorat (LMD)' system. It also provides for the joint award and recognition of the *Diplôme Universitaire*, chairing of examination panels and enrolment of students from the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie* and the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management for higher studies in France.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management and the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie* have acquired sufficient maturity to progress to the status of University. In fact, it has been through the assistance and support of two Professors from the *Université de Limoges*,

Mr Gilles Broussaud and Mr Jean François Guénal who actually conducted a Resource Utilisation Audit in 2010 and recommended that both institutions presently have sufficient excess capacity in terms of space, physical infrastructure and equipment for doubling their student population and to be upgraded to university status.

The House may wish to know that both institutions have developed strong linkages with reputed international institutions like the University of Limoges, TAFE International Australia, Glamorgan University in the United Kingdom and Singapore Polytechnic. They have emerged as quality institutions in the field of technical education at diploma level. With their strong background, these two institutions are now well poised to become full-fledged degree awarding bodies in their own right.

Besides, the new university will have its own Head of Quality Assurance to formulate quality assurance policies and practices and oversee the implementation of the system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the *Université des Mascareignes* will operate according to high standards of quality and will be accompanied by the University of Limoges and other international institutions as well as *l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie*.

I am pleased to inform the House that the *Recteur* of *l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie* (AUF) will appoint a representative on the *Comité de Pilotage* to ensure the proper establishment of the *Université des Mascareignes*. The AUF will also provide advice and support specifically on staff training, mounting of new programmes and upgrading of library resources. It is also proposed to approach the *Commission de l'Océan Indien* for its collaboration.

Research being a vital component of quality improvement, the new university will focus attention on research in areas of interest to industry and the public sector with special emphasis on sustainable development.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Clause 9 of the Bill makes provision for the University to be managed by a Board of Governors which will comprise -

- A President appointed by the Prime Minister;
- A Director-General appointed by the Prime Minister;
- One representative each of students, academic and general staff;
- Five persons, to be appointed by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the Minister, out of whom three shall come from the private sector. Out of

these five members, at least, one member should have experience in financial matters, one in tertiary education and another one in training.

The Board will be able to set up any sub-committee to assist it in the performance of its functions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the two institutions currently employ a total of 124 employees. In order to safeguard the interests of the staff, Clause 38 of the Bill makes provision for the employees on the permanent and pensionable establishment of the two institutions to be transferred to the permanent and pensionable establishment of the *Université des Mascareignes* on terms and conditions which shall be not less favourable and with continuity in the period of service.

I have to inform the House that there is consensus among the staff of the two institutions on the setting up of the new *Université des Mascareignes* and, I must also add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that they are all waiting impatiently for this Bill in order to integrate this new institution. My Ministry will set up a committee with the participation of the Ministry of Civil Service to ensure that the transition is carried out smoothly.

As regards the assets of the IST or the SDIM, they will be vested into the *Université des Mascareignes*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is important to stress that the setting-up of the *Université des Mascareignes* will not require any heavy investment as the resource audit of the University of Limoges has confirmed that the two institutions have the required infrastructure and laboratory equipment to become a university.

As regards funding, the *Université des Mascareignes* will receive Government support and will continue to generate revenue through fees and charges. Clause 26(i) of the Bill provides that the University may receive grants and donations.

It is the international trend now to encourage private contribution to research and innovation as well as skills training and development. We have included in this Bill a new provision at Section 15 of the Statutes for a Head of Projects, Estates and Endowments in line with international practice. This would enable the University to manage and ensure rigorous implementation of capital projects, receive and manage endowment funds and property of the university in ventures that are sound and ethical.

As regards the curriculum, the proposed University will be the first of its kind in the

region, to offer programmes with an international dimension in both English and French. Hence, it will reinforce Government's endeavour to attract foreign students from French speaking countries of the Northern Africa and Indian Ocean regions.

The proposed University will provide multi-level tertiary education including continuing professional education, while making provision for the recognition of prior and experiential learning and flexibility for transition between programmes to meet the development needs of Mauritius in various disciplines.

In its initial phase of operation, the proposed university will focus on areas such as Information, Communication and Technology; Accountancy, Banking and Financial Services; Business Information Systems; Civil, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, without neglecting aspects relating to concepts of sustainable development technologies and renewable resources/energies.

At a later stage, Government will provide the necessary incentives for the university to come up with new programmes in emerging areas, such as nanotechnology, renewable energy, marine and life sciences which may be needed in supporting prospective emerging economic fields of activity.

As an institution geared towards a hands-on and practical approach to higher learning, the proposed University will have the following faculties, focusing on professional fields in higher education -

- (a) Sustainable Development and Engineering;
- (b) Business and Management, and
- (c) Information & Communication Technology.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the issue of quality and quantity in tertiary education has been raised in some quarters. Some people have been creating the myth that too many tertiary education institutions are being set up.

Let me state it in clear terms that the policy of expansion of tertiary education is not at the expense of quality. I am tempted to take the examples of SC and HSC. There used to be a time when only the few economically blessed ones were able to take the SC exams. And I know that in villages people used to light firecrackers when a student would pass his/her SC. But today, it is natural that students going to schools have to go through the SC process and the same applies to HSC. Most students, if not all students aspire to pass their HSC and the same applies to

tertiary education. Giving access to all qualified students to university education cannot in any way bring down quality. I just cannot understand this.

I wish to inform the House that we are constantly improving quality assurance mechanisms within the tertiary education sector. Three international experts in quality assurance are presently reviewing the quality assurance system of the Tertiary Education Commission and, as announced in the Government Programme, a Tertiary Education Bill will be introduced with provisions for more effective mechanisms to ensure quality assurance. We have a financial services sector which, through hard work and leadership, is today the number one provider of Foreign Direct Investment to India. And how did this happen? Who actually works in this sector, if not Mauritians who have been trained here locally? One cannot just say that because we have so many lawyers, so many accountants, the quality of these professionals has gone down. We just have to look at the economic indicators for this country. We keep on having a positive growth in this country. For the last 30 years, Mr Speaker, Sir, this country has achieved a GDP positive growth rate of 5.2% on average. If it was not for the quality of the education provided to the people of this country at all levels, we would not have achieved these figures. The argument that because we are providing more access, quality is going down, is based on false premises.

I have also to inform the House that we have established collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology of Delhi, with the assistance of the Government of India. Why are we doing this? We would like to get the best institutions here and to achieve the level of excellence that they have achieved in their own country. This linkage with IIT will promote research capacity and help to upgrade professional competence within our tertiary education institutions.

I would like to provide some statistics on the demand for tertiary education. It is foreseen that some 32,000 additional seats will be required in tertiary education institutions, both public and private, by the year 2015 to increase the enrolment rate from 42% to 72%.

Mr Speaker, Sir, demand for the post-secondary and higher education has kept on increasing over the years. In 1968, when Mauritius became independent, there was only one tertiary education institution in Mauritius, that is, the University of Mauritius with less than 1,000 students. Today, it has five faculties and some 11,250 students. And you would know better, Mr Speaker, Sir, what did people not say on the proposal to build the University of Mauritius. It was as if this was going to be a nightmare; it was going to be a white elephant; it

was going to be an institution that wouldn't work. But we have been able to prove them wrong, that we had visionary leaders then and, today, we have the vision of this Prime Minister to yet again forge ahead in the field of education.

In parallel, the Gross Tertiary Enrolment Rate which stood at less than 3% in 1968 increased to 15% in the year 2000 and 28.4% in 2005 respectively, to reach a figure of 46% in 2011.

In 2011, enrolment at the tertiary level was around 46,000 with a student population of 11,250 at the University of Mauritius, 4,370 at the University of Technology, 13,400 at private tertiary institutions and 10,150 in foreign universities and about 6,830 in other publicly-funded institutions.

The admission statistics in the universities show that demand for places at the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology of Mauritius has regularly and systematically exceeded intake capacity owing to limited number of seats in these institutions.

Students joining tertiary education are not only from the HSC cohort of the previous year, that is, those leaving the secondary schools. They also include –

- Holders of two GCE 'A' levels.
- Students who work and those reading for postgraduate degrees
- Students who want to improve their qualifications for promotion or for seeking alternative employment or just people who could not afford to be in education because they were economically weak or, maybe, it is a fact that there was no space available for these students.

I used to work at the University of Mauritius myself and we used to have about 2,000 students. It was a dream to get a seat at the University of Mauritius. Today, as I said, we have nearly 12,000 students in this university and there are so many more students who dream of being a university graduate. Why should we stop the future leaders of this country from achieving their dream?

In 2010, the number of new admissions in the tertiary education sector was around 18,000 and only 7,248 were from the HSC cohort. The remaining came from other sources. There is a strong desire among the younger generations to improve their skills, to acquire knowledge and increase their employability. Should we not encourage these people? Should we not create opportunities for them? While democratising access to tertiary education, we want at

the same time to make tertiary education an important pillar of our economy in terms of generating investment, employment and income, through the transformation of Mauritius into a Regional Knowledge Hub. We want to attract more foreign students to study in Mauritius. The number of foreign students has been increasing steadily and we have set ourselves a target; the next 10 to 15 years, we would like to see 100,000 students from overseas.

(Interruptions)

The Member may say as he wishes, but this is our vision and we are going to achieve it. An enabling environment is being created with the introduction of the student visa and the permission to work for 20 hours weekly. Campaigns are being conducted by the Board of Investment and Enterprise Mauritius which include a component on the promotion of tertiary education.

Mr Speaker, Sir, investments in higher education yield benefits in the long-term as it –

- drives economic competitiveness
- helps to reduce poverty
- contributes to democratisation
- ensures improved governance
- encourages respect of equality and democratic principles, and
- contributes to economic growth

It is by creating an educated and skilled workforce that we will build a knowledge-based economy. Our comparative advantage lies in the capacity of our human resources and in the competitive use of knowledge.

This Government is making history. I am proud to be part of this Government, and its way of looking at things, under the very able leadership of Dr. Ramgoolam, by setting up the fourth university in this country. We are taking a ground-breaking initiative by creating a university in Camp Levieux. Would you believe it? In Pamplemousses! And we would be going even further. In time we would have university campuses in Montagne Blanche, in Pamplemousses and, hopefully, in the South and soon Curepipe will have its own campus. This will give greater confidence to the people living in these regions. I do not understand the scepticism of some who cannot see, who do not have the vision. We have to put our trust in the vision of Dr. Ramgoolam.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, tertiary education has never in the past been given such prominence by any Government that it has today. The proof is the setting up of this new Ministry, the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science Research and Technology demonstrates clearly the commitment of this Government to tertiary education. It is in line with the philosophy of the Labour party to provide equal educational opportunities for all.

It is also in line with the philosophy of this present Government, as I said, under the very able leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, to decentralise and democratise access to tertiary education by setting up university campuses in different parts of the island.

Before I finish, Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to share with my friends here what actually happened in the year 1910. We had this little boy called Kewal who had to walk from Belle Rive to Bel Air to go to a little school in the churchyard. And I am talking about opportunities, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have nearly finished. What would have happened if Mrs Siris did not give young Kewal the chance to be a student at that school in 1910? When we didn't have roads, we didn't have buses, we didn't have free education, we didn't have free transportation? Today we are moving along the same path, giving a chance to each and every child and even more so, even if the child lives in Camp Levieux, Stanley, Trèfles, Pamplemousses and wherever he or she lives. He or she needs to be given the chance and hon. Dr. Ramgoolam is providing the chance to the people of this country.

Let me end, Mr Speaker, Sir, by thanking the hon. Prime Minister for charting this new vision for education in modern Mauritius and for giving me the opportunity to translate his vision and make it a reality. Let me also thank all my colleagues, the Government and the staff of my Ministry for their support. Indeed, a great day for the people of this great little island, a great day particularly for the youth, a great day for the future of this country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I need to thank you and, once again, thank you, Prime Minister! With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend the Bill to the House.

Dr. Bunwaree rose and seconded.

(9.22 p.m.)

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) : M. le président, je vais donc réagir au nom de l'opposition. De prime abord, essayons de décortiquer ce projet de loi, essayons d'en comprendre les objectifs, le pourquoi et le comment au delà de la rhétorique, au-

delà des hommages répétés à Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, hommages tout à fait mérités, au-delà des hommages répétés au Premier ministre actuel, quel est le sens de ce projet de loi?

Nous parlons de deux institutions qui existent déjà : le Swami Dayanand Institute of Management qui se trouve à Pamplemousses et qui a un corps d'étudiants, à peu près 450, je crois que le ministre disait un peu plus, 500 disons, et l'Institut Supérieur de Technologie de Camp Levieux à Rose Hill qui comprend environ 350 étudiants. Ce sont deux institutions qui existent déjà, qui avaient été créées initialement comme étant l'équivalent des polytechniques Singapouriens, c'est-à-dire pour des élèves ayant complétés le *School Certificate*, et qui à cause de la demande pour l'accès à l'enseignement supérieur, tertiaire auquel ne pouvaient répondre les institutions publiques existantes, ont accueilli, avec le temps, des élèves munis de leur *HSC*, pour offrir des cours au niveau du post-secondaire, des cours de deux ans menant à un diplôme version britannique, version française, mais bref, un diplôme. Ce que vient faire ce projet de loi, ce n'est pas d'inventer quelque chose de nouveau, ce n'est pas de faire dans le neuf mais d'intégrer ces deux institutions et de les appeler 'université'. La clause 38 du projet de loi le dit très clairement. Voilà ce de quoi nous parlons : d'une fusion de l'IST et du SDIM de Pamplemousses pour appeler cette nouvelle entité 'Université des Mascareignes'.

Pourquoi le ministre nous a fait un long discours pour nous dire qu'il était d'une importance capitale d'augmenter le taux de scolarisation au niveau du tertiaire. On est d'accord. Mais comment ? En fusionnant deux institutions existantes. Il n'a pas parlé - j'ai écouté attentivement sans interrompre - de nouveaux bâtiments ; il n'a pas parlé de nouvelles facilités ; il n'a pas parlé d'investissement nouveau. Il va faire croître le taux de scolarisation en fusionnant deux institutions qui accueillent déjà 800 élèves. Question qui se pose : le pourquoi - je ne comprends pas très bien - le comment. Comment va se faire cette intégration de deux institutions très différentes. L'une, formée, créée, façonnée selon le modèle français avec des formateurs de formations françaises, des coopérants Français, dans le passé, un financement partiel français, délivrant des diplômes français, les meilleurs partant à Limoges pour compléter leurs études. Et l'autre, le Swami Dayanand Institute, qui a une connexion australienne autant que je sache, qui offre donc un diplôme dans la tradition mauricienne, l'inspiration britannique dirais-je, australienne. Comment va se faire cette intégration? Le ministre n'a pas soufflé mot. Donc, ni le pourquoi ni le comment, tel que présenté par le ministre, n'arrive pas à nous convaincre.

Mais avant de poursuivre, disons que, de ce côté de la Chambre, nous sommes d'accord sur certaines choses. Nous sommes d'accord qu'il faut constamment faire des efforts pour accroître le taux de scolarisation au niveau de l'enseignement supérieur. Nous sommes d'accord qu'il nous faut des campus universitaires décentralisés, déconcentrés, y compris dans le nord. Quand le ministre nous parlait de campus universitaires aux quatre coins de l'île et que nous ne comprenions pas ce qu'il avait en tête, maintenant c'est un peu plus clair. On prend deux institutions existantes, on les met ensemble, on prend une baguette magique et on les appelle universités, et voilà vous avez un campus universitaire à Pamplemousses. Tant mieux! Nous sommes pour la déconcentration des universités.

L'aspiration des étudiants de Pamplemousses et de Camp Levieux pour être des étudiants d'université, pour qu'ils aient de manière quasi automatique droit au passage de la deuxième année, conférant un diplôme à une troisième année menant à une licence universitaire est tout à fait légitime. Nous sommes d'accord. Que les enseignants, peu en nombre, le ministre ne nous l'a pas dit. Mais combien le corps enseignants du Swami Dayanand Institute : une vingtaine, une trentaine ! A Camp Levieux, ils sont moins nombreux déjà. Que ces enseignants veuillent avoir des perspectives de promotion qui puissent demain s'appeler enseignants d'université, professeurs, conférenciers, c'est tout à fait compréhensible et légitime, nous sommes d'accord. Nous sommes aussi d'accord que du moment que les programmes menant à la licence sont en adéquation avec la demande sur le marché du travail, du moment que le programme de la licence réponde aux critères académiques rigoureux permettant l'obtention d'une licence universitaire, du moment que les programmes menant à la licence soient dispensés en tenant compte le rapport coût-efficacité et, d'ailleurs, je m'interroge un peu sur le rôle du ministère des finances par rapport à ce projet de loi, du moment donc que ces conditions soient remplies, nous sommes tout à fait d'accord qu'il y a lieu d'offrir les opportunités au plus grand nombre d'aller le plus loin possible en terme d'études supérieures selon leurs intérêts, selon leurs compétences.

Cela dit, nous ne sommes pas d'accord avec l'idée qu'il soit nécessaire d'avoir une quatrième université publique à Maurice. Tout à l'heure, le ministre qui se perd un peu entre les institutions universitaires, les collèges universitaires, les universités, il nous a sorti cette énormité à l'effet qu'il y aurait 11 universités publiques à Maurice. Les universités, comme vous le savez, M. le président, ce sont les institutions qui peuvent, en leur propre nom, conférer un

diplôme. Actuellement, le Swami Dayanand ne peut pas *award a degree*, comme on dit en anglais. Il va le faire avec le MES ou avec le MITD selon le cas puisqu'il n'est pas une université et cela vaut pour l'IST aussi. Cette université, si elle est créée, sera la quatrième université publique après l'université de Maurice, l'université de technologie, l'Open University. Nous ne sommes pas d'accord qu'il y ait besoin d'une quatrième université publique. Nous ne sommes pas d'accord avec les dispositions particulières du projet de loi. Nous ne sommes pas d'accord avec la disparition des polytechniques qui découlent de ce projet de loi et de la politique de l'État. Donc, je vais expliquer en quoi nous ne sommes pas d'accord; pourquoi nous ne sommes pas d'accord, avant de formuler des propositions, des contre-propositions au nom de l'opposition.

Première raison pourquoi nous ne sommes pas d'accord c'est que nous, nous ne voyons pas la nécessité d'une quatrième université publique. La première des choses à garder en tête, M. le président - et c'est là que je m'adresse à travers vous au ministère des finances – à tenir en considération c'est le rapport coût-efficacité, l'efficience dans la dépense, dans les dépenses publiques. Il y a le facteur évident d'économie d'échelle quand nous multiplions les universités publiques. Ils coûtent moins chers - je le dirai en terme le plus simple possible - d'agrandir une université existante, de faire bénéficier à partir des facilités existantes en plus grand nombre, d'accroître ces facilités que d'aller créer une nouvelle institution. Économie d'échelle c'est aussi la question d'avoir une masse critique pour une université. Laissez-moi-vous expliquer cela! En Australie, si on prend la population totale et que l'on divise ce nombre par la quantité d'universités publiques, on arrive au chiffre de 558,000 à peu près. En Suisse, si on prend la population et l'on divise par le nombre d'universités publiques, le chiffre est de 650,000. En Grande Bretagne, population divisée par le nombre d'universités publiques :540,000. Donc, c'est là la norme internationale. Une université publique par 500,000-600,000 habitants. A Maurice, notre population divisée par deux, parce que nous avons deux universités publiques fonctionnelles, nous arrivons à peu près 650,000 ce qui est dans la norme internationale.

Soit dit, aujourd'hui, l'université de Maurice compte 12,500 d'étudiants et là je prends en compte tout le monde : ceux qui sont à temps partiel, l'université de technologie à peu près 6,000, je crois. Le ministre me corrigera. La plus petite université de Grande Bretagne se trouve a Chichester et elle a 5,000 étudiants. La plus grande, je crois que c'est celle de Leeds, nous disait mon ami Suren Bissoondoyal : 41,000 étudiants. Ici, nous allons créer une nouvelle

université avec 800 étudiants. Masse critique, économie d'échelle, rapport coût-efficacité - le ministère des finances ne pipe mot. Le problème du financement de l'enseignement supérieur est un problème majeur pour les pays en développement comme le nôtre. La demande explose et c'est bien que cette demande explose et pour y répondre les ressources publiques ne peuvent croître proportionnellement au nombre de nouveaux étudiants. Donc, les dépenses par tête d'étudiant tombent d'où le défi de la qualité. Donc, que faut-il faire? Utiliser plus efficacement les ressources existantes ! C'est ce que nous dira n'importe quel ministre des finances. C'est la logique la plus élémentaire et comment vous utilisez le plus efficacement les ressources existantes ? En créant une nouvelle institution ! Je vous le demande, M. le président.

Il faut une amélioration des taux d'efficacité dans l'utilisation des ressources existantes, ce qui requiert également une volonté politique, un consensus parmi les forces politiques et l'on pourrait trouver un consensus si le ministre voulait réfléchir dans ce sens et à la place nous avons la création d'une nouvelle université. Ce problème ne se pose pas uniquement à Maurice. Pour avoir travaillé des années durant, M. le président, sur les systèmes éducatifs africains et dans les autres pays en voie de développement, l'on constate ce même phénomène de la fragmentation des structures institutionnelles au niveau de l'enseignement supérieur. Le problème dès lors c'est que les institutions qui se trouvent être des petites institutions n'arrivent pas à répondre aux besoins de leur pays.

Aujourd'hui, à Maurice, au moment où l'on nous propose de créer une quatrième université publique, quelle est la situation? Nous avons deux universités publiques qui ne fonctionnent pas très bien pour dire le moins. L'université de Maurice, notre vieille université qui date de plus de quarante ans, tout le monde connaît la saga Konrad Morgan. Tout le monde a pris connaissance dans la presse des cas d'ingérence et de politisation à outrance, des réunions hebdomadaires humiliantes dirigées par le ministre, des arbres de l'université à planter, selon le diktat du ministre, la culture du blé, la compétition de peinture commandée par le ministre et le plan de restructuration de l'université de Maurice, où en est-on ? Ces derniers jours, il y a eu toutes sortes d'allégations de malodonne dans les promotions. Je ne sais pas si ces allégations sont fondées, mais tout cela indique un malaise.

Tout cela indique que les choses ne tournent pas rond à Réduit et les problèmes sont légion. Le nombre d'étudiants en inadéquation avec la capacité d'accueil, la qualité de l'enseignement, l'absence de pertinence de certains cours. Bref, le défi de la qualité.

L'université de technologie, n'en parlons pas, M. le président ! La confusion quant au rôle de cette université de technologie qui était censée répondre précisément aux manquements de l'université du Réduit, encore une fois l'inadéquation en terme de locaux qui n'ont pas changés depuis la création de l'université de technologie. C'était quoi déjà 2002-2003 et, aujourd'hui, les locaux sont restés les mêmes et le nombre d'étudiants a passé de 486 à plus d'un millier d'étudiants aujourd'hui. L'exiguïté des locaux, l'impact sur la qualité, la frustration des étudiants et puis toutes ces histoires dont nous avons entendu parler: un étudiant qui obtient un MBA avec des points alloués pour une dissertation qui n'a jamais été soumise. Une *Head of School* qui va s'inscrire pour un PhD au sein de cette même faculté qu'elle est censée diriger. L'initiative UTM-Anna pour recruter des élèves pour une formation médicale avec 2 'B' en HSC ; la suspension du Registrar et je pourrais poursuivre. Donc, deux universités publiques mal gérées ou l'on témoigne de scandale après scandale semaine après semaine.

La troisième, la fameuse Open University de Maurice. Donc, la loi pour la création avait été votée en 2005 et puis rien ne s'est fait jusqu'à 2011. Une nouvelle loi en 2011, ou était-ce 2010, prétendant, donc, s'approprier la paternité de l'université. *I have no quarrel*. Il n'y a pas de problème. Ils veulent que ce soit le Parti Travailleiste qui l'ait créée, il n'y a pas de problème, aussi longtemps que ce soit pour le bien du pays et, pourtant, cette université n'arrive pas à décoller. Donc, nous avons deux universités publiques qui ne fonctionnent pas ou alors fonctionnent très mal. Une troisième université publique qui peine à décoller, qui n'existe pas dans les faits et ne voila-t-il pas qu'on vient nous proposer la création d'une quatrième université publique.

M. le président, mon collègue, le député Baloomoody, m'a piqué les mots que j'allais dire. En voyant tous ces postes qui vont être créés - tout à l'heure, j'y reviendrai - *head of ceci, head of cela*, il y en a une dizaine ; on se dit qu'est-ce que c'est, *sinon jobs for the boys*.

M. le président, j'ai écouté le ministre, il nous a parlé de partenariat, c'est aussi cela qui m'inquiète. Si l'on voit le type de partenariat où s'engage l'université de technologie avec des institutions qui ne sont peu connues ou pas connues de la population mauricienne, on se demande quel genre de partenariat va envisager cette nouvelle université des Mascareignes. Le ministre nous a dit: "*to get the best institutions here*". Mais ce n'est pas du tout la politique de ce gouvernement. Quand nous étions au gouvernement, c'était cela notre approche, de ne pas ouvrir les portes de Maurice à n'importe qui. Nous étions allés chercher, comme l'a fait Singapour, les

meilleurs. Nous avons essayés de convaincre le gouvernement indien de permettre l'établissement à Maurice d'un campus de l'IIT de Bombay. Nous avons été à Manipal pour essayer d'obtenir l'implantation chez nous de la meilleure université privée indienne offrant des cours de médecine. Nous avons été cherchés Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS). Nous avons été cherchés effectivement les meilleurs et c'est cela l'approche de Singapour. Allez à Singapour et vous verrez que les meilleures universités Européennes et Américaines y sont. Mais avec le gouvernement qui nous a succédé en 2005, nous avons vu une politique de porte ouverte permettant à n'importe qui voulant se risquer à affronter les forces du marché de venir s'établir chez nous. C'était le laisser-faire, sinon pour ne pas dire le laisser-aller, et à n'importe qui même, sur le plan local, créer une institution qu'on baptisait du jour au lendemain Université.

Le problème fondamental et la raison fondamentale pourquoi nous sommes contre la création d'une quatrième université publique, c'est que nous n'acceptons pas que la qualité soit sacrifiée à la quantité. L'obsession du présent ministre de l'enseignement supérieur - et je ne fais jamais des questions politiques des questions de personne, je ne m'attaque pas à l'homme, je m'attaque aux ministres et à la politique que le ministre mène - et donc de son ministère qui n'existait pas avant lui et qui n'existe que par lui, c'est de présenter des chiffres toujours en augmentation, plus d'étudiants, plus d'institutions, plus d'universités et cela se fait aux dépens de la qualité. Le ministre nous a dit tout à l'heure *that he is constantly improving the quality assurance mechanism*. Donnez-moi un exemple, M. le président; cela fera bientôt deux ans qu'il est ministre de l'enseignement supérieur et que son ministère existe, un seul exemple of *constantly improving the quality assurance mechanism*. Tout au contraire, nous avons un *Tertiary Education Commission* discrédité, aussi sujet à des scandales rapportés dans la presse dont le mécanisme d'assurance qualité ne fonctionne plus.

Le ministre, tout à l'heure nous a dit qu'il existait à Maurice 11 universités publiques et là à présent il se propose de transformer avec une baguette magique, deux instituts en université. Je pense qu'il convient de se rappeler la distinction entre une université et un institut. Souvenez-vous, M. le président, quand, au lendemain de l'indépendance de l'Inde, Jawaharlal Nehru s'engagea dans un processus de démocratisation de l'accès à l'enseignement dans la grande péninsule, il créa les IITs qui font aujourd'hui la fierté de l'Inde. Il ne les appela pas *Indian Universities of Technology*, mais *Indian Institutes of Technology*, parce qu'il y a une différence. La différence c'est que les universités offrent toute une palette d'options en termes d'études,

tandis que les instituts sont focalisés sur un nombre limité de disciplines. C'est cela la différence. Quand l'on créa le Swami Dayanand Institute of Management, vous étiez peut-être du gouvernement à l'époque, M. le président, mais vous n'étiez pas trop bête en choisissant de l'appeler institut et non pas *Swami Dayanand Management University*. Quand l'on créa l'institut supérieur de technologie, je ne sais plus qui était le Premier ministre, mais peu importe, cette personne et les membres de son gouvernement n'étaient pas trop idiots en choisissant de l'appeler Institut Supérieur de Technologie et non pas Université Supérieure de Technologie, parce que l'idée c'était d'avoir des instituts au niveau tertiaire et non pas des universités. Il y a une différence fondamentale. Aujourd'hui, à Singapour, il y a cinq universités pour une population d'un peu plus de cinq millions et à côté il y a cinq grandes polytechniques offrant, au niveau *post 'O' level*, une formation de haut niveau, de grande qualité pour former des techniciens, des professionnels au niveau intermédiaire.

Ici, à Maurice, c'est l'obsession de la quantité. Et, voyez-vous, tous nos collègues parlementaires qui ont été à l'université savent ce qui fait une université en termes de la vaste de formation intellectuelle qui est offerte de par les différentes disciplines, les différents départements, les différentes facultés, savent ce que c'est qu'un corps enseignant universitaire, savent ce que c'est que des facilités, des recherches au niveau universitaire. Quelqu'un ici pourra-t-il aller prétendre que le Swami Dayanand Institute of Management, plus l'institut supérieur de technologie, pourrait *ipso facto* du moment que ce projet de loi est voté, être des universités. Soyons sérieux, M. le président ! Et aujourd'hui, vous savez les universités font face à des défis énormes.

Je voulais me référer à un document de la banque mondiale qui disait qu'aujourd'hui la tâche la plus hardie, la plus difficile à laquelle se retrouve confrontée les institutions universitaires, c'était de passer à une culture favorisant l'innovation et le changement de l'approche pédagogique traditionnelle. Il y avait donc une présentation des changements requis comme les perspectives notoires interdisciplinaires plutôt que disciplinaires, la flexibilité dans l'apprentissage, le travail en groupe plutôt que des cours magistraux, la résolution des problèmes au lieu de la mémorisation des faits, l'apprentissage pratique, voyages d'études, conférences, stages comme complément de la théorie, l'évaluation des connaissances par le biais des travaux sur des projets qui démontrent les compétences et non par les examens, un choix multiple, la culture informatique. Honnêtement, ces deux instituts, sont-ils aptes dans l'immédiat à s'appeler

universités et à relever ces défis ? Mais au-delà, M. le président, quelle est la vision d'ensemble ? Quel est le plan du ministre, de son ministère, du gouvernement pour l'enseignement supérieur ? Où est ce fameux document de stratégie que nous avait promis le ministre et qui, avec grand fanfare, avait réuni tous les représentants des institutions tertiaires de Maurice, avait fait venir des sommités internationales - mon bon ami, le Dr. Yusuf Shahid de la banque mondiale ? Où est ce plan ? Où est la vision d'ensemble ? Le dernier programme du gouvernement, version 2012 nous parle, si je ne me trompe pas, d'un *Tertiary Education Bill*. Le ministre vient d'y faire référence, qui est censé offrir une loi cadre pour le supérieur. Donc, on nous annonce une quatrième université publique, mais la loi cadre n'est pas là, elle n'est pas encore prête. Il n'y a pas de vision énoncée ; il n'y a pas de planification démontrée ; il n'y a pas de loi cadre et l'on nous demande de voter une quatrième université publique. Et quelle coordination ! Il faut éviter le double emploi. Ce n'est pas le ministre des finances qui me contredira. Il faut qu'il y ait une relation de synergie entre les institutions publiques du tertiaire. Il faut qu'il y ait une articulation réfléchie, productive et efficiente entre ces institutions. Le ministre n'a pas pipé mot par rapport à cela et la situation est grave. Il m'a été rapporté que le président du conseil d'administration de l'Université de Technologie aurait déclaré que ce qu'offrait comme cours l'Université de Maurice ne le concernait pas. L'Université de Technologie fera ce qu'elle veut en termes de son offre de cours.

Donc, le tertiaire actuellement, c'est une cacophonie, c'est l'anarchie. Il n'y a aucune concertation, ne parlons pas de coordination entre les institutions existantes. Et voilà qu'on va nous annoncer une quatrième université publique avec des projets très ambitieux comme en témoigne le nombre de facultés que nous propose le projet de loi sans aucune mention d'une coordination quelconque.

Voyons le bâtiment de la MBC à Curepipe, M. le président. J'ai rigolé un bon coup quand le ministre nous a parlé de campus universitaire à Curepipe. Vous savez ce que sera le campus universitaire à Curepipe. C'est donc ce bâtiment de la MBC, dont un quart ira à l'Université de Maurice parce qu'il manque de place à Réduit, un deuxième quart ira à l'Université de Technologie parce que les élèves se retrouvent dans des collèges secondaires, le troisième quart ira à l'*Open University* de Maurice qui n'existe *pas dans les faits* et le quatrième a été confié à l'honorable Mohamed pour un centre de l'OIT quelconque. Voilà le campus universitaire de Curepipe. Aucune coordination !

Donc, M. le président, vous aurez compris que nous ne sommes pas d'accord avec la création d'une – le ministre aura peut-être l'élégance de m'écouter, comme je l'ai fait, durant tout son discours - quatrième université publique parce que nous n'en voyons pas le besoin, parce que cela pour nous est gage d'inefficacité et de gaspillage de fonds publics. Mais venons-en au libellé du projet de loi!

And you will forgive me, Mr Speaker, Sir, for lapsing into English because that would be much easier since the Bill is in English. I will make, as quickly as possible, a few remarks. First, in the interpretation section, section 2, I find it to be very indicative, of the confusion as to what constitutes a University, that the definition of academic staff should read –

“Academic staff means persons who hold office at the *Université des Mascareignes* to teach or to do research.”

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, the teaching personnel faculty at University does both teaching and research. Those are not alternatives; those are not mutually exclusive streams. Any person teaching at University must both teach and engage in research. So, this should read to teach and/or to do research. But the “and” should be there. I can only hope that this is a mere typing mistake and that it will be rectified by the Minister at Committee Stage. I was also very confused when I consider clause 4 – the objects of *Université des Mascareignes*. The first object is stated to -

“Provide tertiary education, and develop and promote excellence in life, natural, applied and social sciences and humanities.”

So, you have life science, natural science and thirdly applied science and then fourthly social science. And there is no faculty provided for in terms of social sciences and humanities. Maybe the Minister again or his colleague might try to clarify us.

Clause 5 – the functions of *Université des Mascareignes*, this is an exact replica of the UTM Bill. In fact, most of this Bill reflects simply a copy and paste operation. It is exactly the UTM Bill and anybody can go and check. The Minister will say: well, the UTM Bill was our baby.” So, we can't criticise. But my point is: the UTM ...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I introduced the UTM.

(Interruptions)

Absolutely, we know it very well. The project was initiated under the Labour Government between 1995 and 2000. My predecessor, ex-Minister Pillay, did a lot of the groundwork and when we came to Government instead of behaving in a partisan manner, as was done with the Open University, we implemented a very good project that was initiated by the Labour Government. That project has now endured the passage of time. What I would have thought proper is to review the provisions of that Act in the light of experience so that when one comes with a new Bill for the *Université des Mascareignes*, one does not just copy and paste. But one reviews critically the University of Technology of Mauritius Act in the light of experience. But that was not done.

I will go on to clause 6 which speaks of partnerships with other institutions. We, on this side of the House, are very worried when we hear about partnership after what has been done. I am both in the public and private sector and the Minister knows to what I am referring to and I will not go into the details because I do not want to get personal in any matter.

Clause 8 – inquiries; again, this is a replica of the University of Technology of Mauritius Act and provides that it is the Prime Minister who may institute an inquiry and this is one of the points where I think one could have reviewed the experience of the UTM in the light of experience to suggest some other mechanisms.

Part 3 concerning administration is basically the UTM Act which has been reproduced almost in totality.

Part IV which is the Academic Structure raises some questions. Whereas the University of Technology has schools, it was American inspired, a new model of university with schools, in this case we have kept the structure of the UTM, but we have gone that to faculties. I suppose it is more grandiose to have faculties instead of schools. The Act lists a number of faculties and I ask myself why does this have to be done in the Act, the more so as the Statutes provide that more faculties can be added by amendment to the Statutes. At clause 15 (2) there is reference to ‘the Faculty of Sustainable Development and Engineering’ and I would like here to sound a word of caution.

Sustainable development is not just about the natural sciences. Sustainable development is a much broader concept that includes the whole of the operation of society, including the social sciences, the economics. The way this faculty is being shaped does not at all reflect that. clause 15 (2) (a) (ii) speaks of ‘a Department of Applied Electrical and Electronic Engineering’. I

have been told that by definition electrical and electronic engineering are applied. Why does it state 'Applied Electrical and Electronic Engineering' as if they could exist non-applied, theoretical electrical and electronic engineering? This simply does not exist in any university that I know of. Again, I would hope that it is a mere typing error and would be quite happy if the Minister would simply bring the required amendments.

Same holds for the subclause (6) which creates - listen to this, Mr Speaker, Sir - a Department of Applied Computer Science, as if computer science is not applied. We now have applied and non-applied computer science. I think that somebody somewhere is hopelessly confused or let us be kind and say that it is simply a typing mistake.

Then there are all these posts. There will be 'Deans of Faculties', fair enough! There will be a 'Head of Finance' and then there will be a 'Head of Information Services', copied from the UTM Act. The post has never been filled at the UTM with its 6,000 students and here with 800 students at the new university, we need a 'Head of Information Services'! Then we have a 'Head of Internal Affairs, Student Welfare and Support'. At the University of Mauritius the Registrar does the job. Here, we will have a separate Head. Then we have a 'Head of Projects, Estates and Endowments'. In the University of Mauritius it is the Head of Finance who would do that or the Director General.

(Interruptions)

I must say that when I read this Bill, this is precisely what came to mind. Then a 'Head of Quality Assurance' which is purely an academic function. At the University of Mauritius this is the responsibility of one of the vice-Chancellors. At the UTM it is the responsibility of the Director General. Here, we will have a separate 'Head of Quality Assurance'. Granted that you need to have an officer to look at quality assurance, checking out the different courses that are being offered, the lectures and so on, but not a Head. A 'Head of Research, Consultancy and Innovation' whereas there is no research presently! Jobs for the boys! Nothing more, nothing less, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Clause 27 (2) - Execution of documents, we are told that –

'No cheque shall be signed by or on behalf of the *Université des Mascareignes* unless it is signed by the President of the Board and the Director General of the *Université*'.

I do not understand this. The President has a non-executive position, he heads the Board. At the University of Mauritius it is the vice-Chancellor and the Head of Finance; at the UTM it is

the Director General and the Accountant. And here - this is not in the UTM Act - it will be the President involving himself in operational matters. He is going to sign cheques as well as the Director General, but there is nobody from finance! Cheques will be signed by the President and the Director General, but with nobody from finance, contrary to present practice at the University of Mauritius and at the UTM.

Even more astounding is the 'Transfer of property and borrowing'. This is a university and one knows that by definition a university enjoys a fair degree of autonomy...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order now!

Mr Obegadoo: ...this is the hallmark of any university that there is a fair degree of autonomy. What do we find here?

'The *Université Des Mascareignes* shall not, except with the approval of the Minister –

- (a) sell or exchange any property or make any donation, or
- (b) borrow any money (...)"

This *Université* that will want to sell off ten old computers will need the approval of the Minister! This *Université* that contracts a loan of Rs500,000 will need the approval of the Minister! That is the hallmark of this Minister, interference and involvement in the daily nitty-gritty, operational issues of each and every university. Go and ask the faculty at the University of Mauritius! That is what has been happening over the last two years and that is why we gave a friendly advice to the Prime Minister to abolish this Ministry and have a single Ministry of Education, as has always been the case since Independence.

(Interruptions)

But the powers of the Minister be consecrated by this Bill, the right to interference of the Minister is further evidenced by clause 31 which says that –

- (a) 'the Board shall submit to the Minister not later than 30 September every year, an estimate of the income and expenditure of the *Université des Mascareignes* ...,
- (b) where the Minister gives his approval under subsection (1), the Minister may -
 - (a) approve only part of the expenditure under any item; and
 - (b) direct the Board to amend the estimate (...)'

Mr Speaker, Sir, you have been a Minister for so many years. Ever since we have had the Tertiary Education Commission that was its role. Before we only had the University of

Mauritius, then we had other tertiary institutions and the Tertiary Education Commission was voted in. These institutions have estimates every year which are sent to the Tertiary Education Commission which comes along with the Ministry of Education to negotiate budgetary provision. There is a global sum that is given to the Tertiary Education Commission and it goes about distributing those funds.

For the first time, a Minister is going to approve the estimates of a university! I suppose the next Bill that he will introduce before the House is to abolish the Tertiary Education Commission! This, to any person who understands what academic independence or what the autonomy of universities is about, is absolutely unacceptable, abhorrent.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the rest of the Bill is mostly a replica of the UTM Act with, however, a few issues, which I should not delve at length on because I understand hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun will raise the issue of transfer of staff and some injustices that may arise in terms of transfer of staff.

So, the second reason why we are opposed to the creation of this fourth public university is the specific issues that are manifest on the basis of the Bill that is before us.

The third reason, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that - there are three fundamental reasons why we oppose the creation of the fourth university - it announces the disappearance of polytechnics in Mauritius. Now, as an economy develops, we all know that there need to be a trained stratum of middle level professionals, and that is the role of polytechnics called by different names. In France, you now have the *Lycée Professionnel*; in Singapore, polytechnics are a well-established model. After 'O' levels in Singapore, the majority of students do not go to junior colleges to read for 'A' levels, which is an academic pre-university qualification, but they go to Polytechnics where they are trained over three years and prepared for entry into the world of work, with high level education.

In Mauritius, that was the initial idea when these institutes were created. Now, there will be no Polytechnics at all in Mauritius at that level and that is the third reason why we are totally opposed to this fourth university, whereas in Singapore today we have five polytechnics, each between 5,000 and 20,000 students, in Mauritius, we will have none. That is a matter of immense concern. Singapore has even just created the Singapore Institute of Technology - not a university - to provide a pathway for those students coming out of polytechnics, with the

equivalent of 'A' levels. But we choose to ignore what is international best practice in terms of education and training to go for universities.

The World Bank, commenting upon the trend in developing countries, referred to *les institutions non universitaires* and five or six years ago, found that they were about 1,000 *institutions non universitaires au niveau du post-secondaire en comparaison avec 300 universités*. *Et le commentaire de la banque mondiale, c'était que cette diversification* - that is the keyword: diversification at tertiary level - *est concurrencée par le changement de statut d'établissement de l'enseignement supérieur en université* - this is what is happening here - *sans combler au préalable le vide laissé derrière*. This is the danger we are pointing to, Mr Speaker, Sir, and that is the third reason why we are against the creation of a fourth public university.

M. le président, il serait irresponsable pour l'opposition, ayant dit qu'elle était d'accord avec la nécessité d'accroître le taux de scolarisation, d'accord que les aspirations des étudiants et du personnel enseignant de ces deux instituts étaient légitimes, que nous n'apportons pas une proposition. Je voudrais dire une chose que m'a rappelé tout à l'heure le ministre Bunwaree, soit dit en passant. L'on pourrait se demander si cette idée est une idée aussi extraordinaire, celle de transformer le SDI et l'IST en université, pourquoi cela n'a pas été fait par le ministre David ou le ministre Bunwaree avant 2010?

Savez-vous, M. le président, que toutes ces institutions qui offrent une formation au niveau post-secondaire veulent devenir des universités? Savez-vous que quand je devins ministre de l'éducation, le *Swami Dayanand Institute* voulait devenir une université en l'an 2000 déjà. Le MGI voulait acquérir le statut d'université pour délivrer des diplômes universitaires, *degree awarded by the MGI*. Le MIE voulait devenir une université pour que le MIE puisse avoir, ne pas passer par le MES, des MIE *degrees*. Toutes les institutions publiques qui offrent une formation post-secondaire aspirent à devenir des universités, parce que les étudiants veulent se dire étudiants d'université. Le personnel enseignant veut se dire membre d'une faculté d'université, le directeur voudrait devenir vice-chancelier – je ne sais quoi - ou directeur général. Donc, on a dû faire face à ces pressions et on y a résisté au nom de la qualité, en leur disant: «mais non, vous pouvez vous affilier à l'Université de Maurice; vous continuerez à bénéficier du soutien du MES.» Mais on ne peut pas, du jour au lendemain, devenir université, n'est pas université qui le veut.

L'ex-ministre Pillay, avant moi, a résisté à cette même pression. J'ai résisté à cette pression jusqu'en 2005. Le ministre David, le ministre Bunwaree ont tous résisté à cette pression. Evidemment, aujourd'hui, le ministre Bunwaree devra venir justifier. Il est obligé et je le plains et je le comprends. Il sera obligé de justifier l'injustifiable par solidarité ministérielle, le conseil des ministres l'ayant désigné pour s'exprimer aujourd'hui.

(Interruptions)

Mais, M. le président, tout le monde a résisté à cette pression jusqu'à ce qu'il y ait un ministère de l'enseignement supérieur qui ne trouve d'autres moyens de justifier son existence qu'en créant des universités publiques à gogo. Voilà où est le problème !

Nous proposons, M. le président, quelque chose de très simple, que le *Swami Dayanand Institute of Management* de Pamplémousses, que l'Institut Supérieur de Technologie de Camp Levieux deviennent des instituts universitaires qui soient parties intégrantes de l'Université de Maurice tout simplement.

L'on aura un campus universitaire à Pamplémousses, les diplômes seront délivrés par l'Université de Maurice. Le personnel enseignant sera personnel enseignant de l'Université de Maurice, les étudiants seront étudiants de l'Université de Maurice et donc, nous aurons deux instituts universitaires comme l'Université de Londres. L'Université de Londres qui comprend – je ne sais plus - une douzaine, une vingtaine de *colleges*, le *Kings College*, l'*Imperial College* avec entre 14,000 et 22,000 étudiants; UCL, LSC, tout cela c'est l'Université de Londres. L'Université d'Oxford, c'est pareil. Vous avez une vingtaine de collèges autonomes, mais qui forment ensemble l'Université d'Oxford avec l'effet de synergie. L'Université de Cambridge, c'est pareil. L'Université de Delhi, c'est pareil. Et c'est ce qu'il nous faut à Maurice. Un campus universitaire de l'Université de Maurice dans le nord, dans l'est, dans l'ouest, dans le sud et à Rodrigues, peu importe, mais ce serait bénéficier justement des économies d'échelles. Ce serait moins coûteux pour le ministère des finances et cela comporterait d'immenses avantages pour le personnel enseignant comme les élèves de ces deux instituts et pour l'Université de Maurice.

Aussi, M. le président, aujourd'hui, je voudrais proposer un nouveau concept. L'ancien ministre de l'éducation, Monsieur Gokhool, avait parlé de *world-class education*, qui ne voulait rien dire. Mais ce dont nous aurions besoin aujourd'hui, c'est d'avoir à Maurice une *world-class University*. Il faudrait que notre Université de Maurice - laissons à l'Université de Technologie le temps de se développer, mais notre Université de Maurice, historique - qui a une réputation

internationale soit reconnue dans la sous région, dans la région, voire au plan international. Si les universités Singapouriennes le sont, pourquoi est-ce que la petite Ile Maurice ne pourrait pas avoir une université reconnue internationalement?

Le ministre de l'enseignement supérieur nous dit qu'il fera venir 100,000 étudiants à Maurice d'ici 2015. Je lui souhaite bonne chance. Je n'y crois pas, mais je lui souhaite bonne chance.

J'aimerais que cela soit possible, mais je sais pertinemment bien que ce n'est pas l'appellation « Université des Mascareignes » qui va attirer des étudiants du continent Africain. Certainement pas, alors que l'Université de Maurice a un nom, a une réputation, c'est l'évidence même ! Si vous voulez attirer des étudiants étrangers, construisez, améliorez, agrandissez, rehaussez le niveau de notre Université de Maurice qui devrait faire notre fierté nationale !

M. le président, ce concept de *world-class university*, pour nous, représente l'avenir. Ce concept a été explicité dans nombreux de publications. L'objectif étant aujourd'hui, et je me permets une citation d'un expert renommé dans le domaine, Jamil Salmi, qui parle justement de ce que serait une world-class university, en disant qu'il faut trois éléments -

Three complementary sets of factors at play in top universities -

(a) A high concentration of talent both faculty and students.

Où est-ce qu'on aura plus de chance de l'avoir à l'université de Maurice ou à l'Université des Mascareignes ?

(b) Abundant resources to offer a rich learning environment and to conduct advance research.

Où trouvera-t-on cela ? A l'Université Des Mascareignes ou à l'Université de Maurice ?

(c) Favourable governance features that encourage strategic vision, innovation and flexibility and that enable institutions to make decisions and to manage resources without being encumbered by bureaucracy.

Où trouvera-t-on cela, à l'Université de Maurice ou à l'Université Des Mascareignes ? *What makes a world-class university today ?* Je vais vous donner le *check list* que propose la

banque mondiale en vous posant la question, M. le président, à vous, et à travers vous, à tous les collègues de cette Chambre. Quelle est la meilleure option ? Créer une nouvelle université ou regrouper ces institutions au sein de l'université de Maurice ?

Alors les questions étaient: *what is the economic rationale and the expected added value compared with the contribution of existing institutions?* Le ministre n'a pas été capable de répondre. *What is the vision for this University? What niche will it occupy?* Il n'y a pas eu de niche identifiée. On va faire tout ce qu'on fait déjà. *How many world-class universities are desirable and affordable as a public sector investment?* Combien de *world-class universities* pourra-t'on financé à Maurice? *What strategy would work best in the country context? Upgrading existing institutions, merging existing institutions or creating new institutions!* Clairement, le moins couteux, le plus facile et le plus bénéfique à tous et à toutes *is upgrading the existing institutions. What will be the relationship and articulation between the new institution and existing tertiary education institutions?* Le ministre n'a pas pipé mot. *What are the governance arrangements that must be put in place to facilitate this transformation and support suitable management practices? What level of autonomy and forms of accountability will be appropriate?* Rien, à part les ingérences ministérielles dont j'ai fait mention tout à l'heure. *What are the vision and mission statements? What are the specific goals that the University is seeking to achieve? In what niche will it pursue excellence in teaching and research? What are the internationalisation goals that the university need to achieve? All these are the check list that the World Bank suggests, makes for a world-class university. The answer is very simple. Let us strive to make of our University of Mauritius a reputable, a well resource, a fit for purpose world-class university.* C'est là la voie de l'avenir, M. le président. Je vais donc conclure en vous disant, M. le président, que cette Université Des Mascareignes n'a pas sa raison d'être tout comme ce ministère que nous propose l'Université Des Mascareignes n'a pas sa raison d'être et je vous avouerai ma crainte, M. le président, que ce ministre est dangereux pour l'île Maurice.

(Interruptions)

Absence de plan, de vision, obsession avec les résultats quantitatifs ! On a entendu maintes fois le ministre dire ici que son boulot à lui c'était de produire un nombre toujours croissant de diplômés ou de licenciés sans se préoccuper de la qualité ou de leur possibilité de trouver un emploi après. Absence de vision, rien que cette obsession avec des résultats quantitatifs et le danger est énorme, M. le président. Pourquoi je dis que ce ministre est dangereux ? C'est parce

que voilà le danger qui nous guette. Les conséquences de ses actions irréfléchies, c'est un flot d'étudiants dans des institutions de plus en plus dysfonctionnelles. Le danger c'est des diplômés sans compétence professionnelle valable. Le danger c'est une demande constante de financement qui va grever le budget public. Le danger c'est des taux de chômage élevés chez les diplômés. Le danger c'est l'augmentation du caractère politique de l'éducation et des politiques d'emplois. Ce ministre est dangereux et, donc, que notre position soit très claire. Nous disons oui à la démocratisation de l'accès à l'enseignement supérieur, mais non à l'obsession de la quantité aux dépens de la qualité.

Tant que la prétendue démocratisation ne soit pas associée à la qualité, tant que cette prétendue démocratisation ne permet pas un progrès individuel pour chacun des étudiants, cette prétendue démocratisation que nous annonce le ministre n'est qu'un leurre. C'est pour cela, M. le président, que nous constatons, aujourd'hui, que ce projet de loi nous est présenté à un moment où l'enseignement supérieur est déstabilisé, que le bilan du ministère est un bilan catastrophique, et nous avons donc lancé un appel au Premier ministre que je réitère aujourd'hui pour l'abolition pure et simple de ce ministère et le retour à un ministère de l'éducation nationale. Ce projet de loi vaut ce qu'il vaut, M. le président. Nous sommes pour la démocratisation, mais contre une quatrième université publique. J'en ai terminé.

(10.28 p.m.)

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): M. le président, se mettre debout à cette heure si tardive pour parler de la création d'une université est sûrement quelque chose plus qu'émotionnelle, en particulier, dans le contexte du système éducationnel de notre pays. Je voudrais tout d'accord commencer par féliciter mon collègue, l'honorable Rajesh Jeetah, ministre responsable de l'éducation tertiaire, pour être venu avec ce projet de loi malgré tout ce qu'on a entendu et qu'on vient d'entendre et qu'on va essayer d'éclaircir davantage et aussi féliciter le Premier ministre pour sa vision. Cela a été peut-être la chance du Parti Travailleiste et du PMSD, en particulier du Parti Travailleiste, parce que toutes les universités de Maurice aujourd'hui ont été l'œuvre du Parti Travailleiste - l'Université de Maurice, l'Université de Technologie, le Open University et le quatrième, l'Université des Mascareignes. Au moins jusqu'à maintenant, je n'ai pas entendu parler du nom même de cette université qui est un nom extrêmement bien choisi ; un très beau nom, un nom qui rappelle

l'histoire, pas seulement de notre pays, mais de la région, et qui indirectement montre la voie qui est devant nous en ce qui concerne l'arrivée de cette université.

J'ai entendu le discours de l'honorable Obeegadoo de l'Opposition. Il était très bien structuré, en trois parties, avec des points d'accords, des points de désaccords et puis les propositions. Pour les points d'accords, tout le monde est d'accord. Il n'y a pas de problème. On est content. Malheureusement, j'ai vu de la confusion sur les points de désaccords et je vais venir sur certains. Viennent ensuite les propositions. Et puisqu'on n'est pas d'accord sur le désaccord, on ne pourrait pas être d'accord sur les propositions. C'est aussi simple que ça.

L'honorable Obeegadoo a lui même donné l'explication, en parlant de l'Université de Technologie, mais il a confondu entre la conception et la naissance. Le projet de loi était amené par lui, mais le bébé était conçu, non pas neuf mois, mais plusieurs mois avant, et c'était dans le cadre d'une politique. Je pense qu'ils étaient d'accord avec cette politique parce qu'ils l'ont continué. A ce moment là, il n'avait pas posé la question - pourquoi ne pas mettre cela sous l'Université de Maurice? Cela aurait été beaucoup plus facile peut-être à l'époque. Mais les choses se compliquent davantage et, aujourd'hui, il vient nous dire pourquoi ne pas mettre ces deux universités – le Swami Dayanand Institute of Management et l'Institut Supérieur de Technologie - sous l'Université de Maurice et créer une autre université? Je pense que c'est une question de *semantics*. On pourrait nous étendre longuement là-dessus.

Ce matin on a eu une question d'un honorable membre de l'Opposition, qui voulait faire le point pour démontrer - j'étais d'accord là-dessus, le gouvernement aussi est d'accord - qu'il faudrait faciliter davantage les étudiants terminant le cycle secondaire pour pouvoir avoir accès à l'université. Il disait même qu'il ne pouvait pas comprendre pourquoi, quand les conditions d'entrée à l'université sont deux sujets *Advanced Level*, il faut exiger *HSC*, donc, permettre plus d'enfants de pouvoir avoir accès à l'université. Eux-mêmes viennent dire maintenant : « non, nous ne sommes pas d'accord avec ça. » Je ne comprends pas. C'est paradoxal parce que, d'un côté, ils sont d'accord avec nous pour accueillir de plus en plus d'étudiants et, d'autre part, quand on voit qu'il y a un engouement, il y a la nécessité de créer des universités, ils disent non. On ne comprend pas.

On ne peut pas aller plus loin dans la mesure du possible maintenant avec l'Université de Maurice. On a augmenté le taux...

(Interruptions)

Ecoutez et vous allez comprendre pourquoi!

L'Université de Maurice a un certain nombre de places. Il y a quatre ans de cela, le taux d'accès à l'Université était aux alentours de 28% ou 29%. Aujourd'hui, il est à 45% ou 46%, mais on n'a pas créé d'autre campus. On a fait avec ce qu'on avait, mais ne croyez pas qu'il y a de la place à l'Université pour accueillir autant d'étudiants, que ce soit à l'Université de Maurice ou à l'Université de Technologie de Maurice. Alors, ils ont dû faire des heures supplémentaires, ils ont dû étendre les horaires, pour pouvoir partager les mêmes infrastructures pour permettre à ce pourcentage d'accès d'augmenter. Mais il y a une saturation à cela. On ne peut pas continuer et c'est pour cela qu'ils auraient dû nous féliciter au lieu de ricaner sur l'utilisation qu'on va faire avec un bâtiment qui est à notre disposition à Curepipe. Alors, laissez le bâtiment comme ça et ne rien faire quand c'est libre, alors que nous avons besoin d'espace ! Ce n'est pas l'idéal, bien sûr!

En attendant l'idéal, en attendant qu'on construise, on utilise l'espace qui est à notre disposition. C'est là que je vois une confusion. Si c'est pour faire de la démagogie, c'est autre chose. Mais je crois dans la capacité des membres de l'Opposition de l'autre côté de la Chambre, et je pense qu'il faut être d'accord sur ce que nous voulons faire.

Alors, pour comprendre ce qu'on veut faire, il va falloir que je reprenne *a bit of the history, I must say, of the Institut Supérieur de Technologie, SDIM and also, technical education in Mauritius* parce que cela vient ensemble.

My colleague did remind the House that in 1988 we had, in fact, a major landmark in the development of technical and vocational education and training in Mauritius with the setting up of, what we called then, the IVTB, that is, the Industrial and Vocational Training Board. We did the necessary regulations. We set up the institutional framework. All were put in place for registration of private training institutions, etc, and that resulted, inter alia, in an increase in access to TVET. C'était important à ce moment là. Il fallait caser une catégorie d'enfants qui avaient besoin de certains types d'études. In 1990, the Technical School Management Trust Fund was set up and it had also contributed in promoting and in increasing access to technical education, là-aussi pour l'éducation technique, through the three polytechnics which operated under the aegis of the TSMTF, that is, the Lycée Polytechnique Sir Guy Forget, Swami Dayanand Institute of Management et l'Institut Supérieur de Technologie.

Now, in that whole development stage, some of the training programmes - *on est arrivé à constater après* - offered by the IVTB and the TSMTF ended up with the same objectives and led to more or less comparable qualifications thus leading to duplication of facilities and of resources. *C'était une constatation, mais on était dans cet état de choses.*

In 2009, therefore, Government agreed to merge the TSMTF and the IVTB into one organisation which we called the MITD. The Bill was passed in Parliament, the MITD Act, which provided for that merging. During the merging, it must be noted that the assets of the IVTB and the TSMTF had been vested with the MITD, but the assets of l'Institut Supérieur de Technologie, IST, and the assets of the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management, SDIM, have, at the commencement of the MITD Act, been vested in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources.

Donc, on avait gardé ces deux là un peu à part. C'est pour cela que je disais en rigolant - ça arrive de temps en temps - que le temps n'était pas venu de faire une Université à ce moment-là pour ces deux institutions. So, what we did is to keep the assets vested with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and we understand that the transitional provision being made under the new legislation is for the transfer of assets of IST and the SDIM to the new University. The merger of the IVTB and the TSMTF did, therefore, exclude the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management and the IST which were transferred under the MITD Act to the University of Technology, Mauritius. *Donc, c'était une étape transitoire. Il fallait attendre à ce que quelque chose allait arriver plus tard. Il fallait travailler aussi pour cela* and the merger had an objective to create a new technological environment which benefitted from the extraordinary developments in technology, provide access to technical education to all regions to meet the growing needs of the industry.

Nous savons aussi maintenant qu'on a commencé, tout de suite après, à parler de Maurice Ile Durable - grand projet du Premier ministre et projet du gouvernement, projet du pays, je dois dire.

Si aujourd'hui on voit ce *merger* comme une petite chose avec la création de l'Université Des Mascareignes, il faut savoir que dans le moyen terme et le long terme, cela va devenir une très grande université. C'est ça la vision du gouvernement parce que cette université va se spécialiser dans certains domaines. Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails, le ministre en a parlé

et, en gros, c'est cette université qui va ouvrir la voie de l'île Maurice dans le domaine de l'énergie soutenable et Maurice Ile Durable.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie* which is, therefore, one of the two institutions having been merged, had a history in the strong link of that Memorandum which was reminded to us by my colleague, the hon. Minister of Tertiary Education, and it was further to a visit of a delegation of Mauritius to France, le Limousin led by the then hon. Minister of Education, in 1998 and that institute, *Institut Supérieur de Technologie*, was a tertiary institution within the TSMTE under the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. It was preparing students in four departments for the courses that have been mentioned - I won't repeat them - by my colleague. It was also developing and still develops until today and proposes programmes for continuous training through its *centre de ressource* and the reputation of this institution, the IST, has grown over the years as one of the key providers of technical education in Mauritius at both full time and part-time levels with diploma holders successfully occupying middle level positions in organisations and many others going to France to pursue their studies - *plusieurs vont en France*. C'est cela qu'on constate et c'est là que je ne comprends pas l'honorable Obeegadoo. Ces instituts travaillent, les gens sont bien formés et bien placés, mais ils veulent continuer et pour cela, ils sont obligés d'aller à l'étranger. C'est en créant l'Université Des Mascareignes que cela va aider ces enfants à rester au pays. Maintenant il y a d'autres enfants qui vont à l'étranger parce qu'il n'y a pas une institution comme l'Université Des Mascareignes, qu'on voudrait créer. Le fait d'avoir cette université va empêcher d'autres enfants qui ne voudraient pas passer par les polytechniques, mais par d'autres voies. Au MITD, nous avons cette possibilité et l'honorable Obeegadoo a dit que les polytechniques ne vont plus exister. Certains vont exister. Même si certains n'existent pas, il y a d'autres qui vont produire des étudiants avec le même niveau de formation et de diplôme.

Le MITD, je disais, produit aussi des étudiants qui font le HND maintenant. Les étudiants entrent avec un niveau de School Certificate, après ils arrivent au HND et avec un an de formation à l'université - que ce soit l'université de Maurice ou l'université de technologie de Maurice ou une université à l'étranger - arrivent avec un diplôme de licence. Pourtant ils ont été formés par le MITD. Lycée Polytechnique de Flacq, c'est la même chose. Donc, il ne faut pas avoir peur. On ne va pas fermer les polytechniques. Mais les polytechniques, c'est surtout pour les mauriciens. Ce n'est pas pour les étrangers. Tandis que l'université va attirer aussi les

étrangers de la région. C'est pour cela que j'ai interrompu le précédent orateur pour lui demander pourquoi ne pas croire que des étudiants étrangers vont venir a l'Université Des Mascareignes aussi. Mais il faut donner le temps au temps. On commence, mais il faut s'attendre à ce que dans un avenir assez proche, je dirai, que cette université va attirer des étudiants étrangers. It goes in line with what we are saying for quite some time now, the setting up of the educational hub in the region.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management, Pamplemousses is also a tertiary institution which was set under the TSMTF under the Ministry of Education - *un peu même type que l'autre*. It was opened in 1995 and prepares for technical diploma level programmes with courses by TAFE in Australia. *Alors un travail avec Limoges, l'autre avec l'Australie ; je ne vois pas pourquoi on ne peut pas continuer. Ces deux institutions étrangères, en particulier Limoges, est tout à fait disponible à nous aider même financièrement pour pouvoir continuer ce qu'on veut faire en créant une nouvelle université.*

The need for a new university is there, Mr Speaker, Sir. The *Université Des Mascareignes* will be, I am sure, a well reputed educational institution which will be renowned both within Mauritius and beyond its borders. The university is a natural growth from all efforts that Government is putting in place for the emergence of Mauritius as knowledge hub for the region.

In recent years, Mr Speaker, Sir, technology has been growing in Mauritius, particularly in the area of mobile communications. Government is moving on the right track through the recognition of the need for the growth of the two technical institutions as fully fledged universities as a priority area for the development of our economy and the Mauritian university sector, we must admit, Mr Speaker, Sir, has evolved considerably since its inception as a small agricultural college in the 60s. It took 30 years before we had about 20% of our cohorts going to university. And from there we are now on track by 2015 to reach the target of above 70%, nearly 72%, of our gross tertiary enrolment ratio as was mentioned by my colleague and to go beyond the schooling sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe, it would be a mistake in developing – there I agree with hon. Obeegadoo - the university sector to focus just on expanding the number of places. We are well aware of this. My colleague knows it and we know what we are doing. We shouldn't just expand the number of places because that would basically put us against other much bigger

countries that have stronger assets. I give you two examples, Mr Speaker, Sir. China has a target to have eight million graduates a year by 2020. India has committed itself to achieve six million graduates a year by 2020. Combined these two countries, therefore, plan to produce 14 million graduates a year. We cannot compete on numbers, but instead we have to focus on quality. There, we agree. This is why I was saying to my colleagues just now; that we are doing it, but we are having also certain difficulties and we need space and we need, of course, investment. I must probably inform the House *qu'à l'Université de Technologie, Maurice à La Tour Koenig, il y un problème d'espace là-bas aussi, comme je disais tout à l'heure. Temporairement peut être on utiliserait le bâtiment de la MBC, mais le gouvernement a décidé, la semaine dernière d'acquérir le terrain qu'il y a à côté de l'université de technologie de Maurice pour pouvoir investir davantage. Il faut s'attendre à ce que cela prenne un peu de temps. Mais en attendant nous devons démarrer. Nous avons des institutions, IST et Swami Dayanand Institute of Management, et il y a déjà 800 étudiants environ, puis il aura d'autres. Avec l'aide de Limoges et de l'Australie, l'université va prendre forme et va continuer à grandir. Il va falloir que cette université s'adapte petit à petit avec tous les développements et, en particulier, avec la vision de Maurice Ile Durable, comme je disais.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, the *Université Des Mascareignes* will be such an innovative university model. It will preserve and leverage on the strength of these two institutions, IST and SDIM, and will provide polytechnic oriented students an option to obtain a university degree with the support of well regarded foreign universities, as I was saying. This approach has quite a few advantages, not least the focus on producing graduates who are attuned to the needs of industry and business. It is worthwhile saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, that within the relatively short span of existence, the IST and SDIM have produced an impressive number of diploma holders, who now work in all walks of industry, many of whom have travelled overseas or been to the UTM to complete their degrees. Students will no longer need to go abroad to acquire their diplomas with the possibility being now available for students to complete their degrees locally.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the *Université Des Mascareignes* promises to be a unique model that provides different pathways for suitable students. It is indeed a strategic move for Mauritius at a time when it is crucial to strengthen our capacity to produce more knowledge and service-oriented experts. I also believe that it will signal to students and parents that critical thinking, analysis and deliberation, hallmarks of tertiary education will be needed and valued in society.

This new university, Mr Speaker, Sir, will hopefully move us from a Mauritian system that is well-known for its success in Africa to one that puts us in the world of 21st century education, to produce students who want to start asking the right questions, to produce solutions to complex problems. And this new university, Mr Speaker, Sir, will be an engine of knowledge, innovation and enterprise. It will ride on tides of global developments and assist Mauritians and students from the region, seize valuable opportunities that will inevitably come our way given the worldwide growth of the tertiary education sector worldwide.

Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, is currently facing growing competition in the knowledge sector and we must not allow us to be left behind. New economic giants as China and Brazil are reshaping the global economic landscape. The US economy, with dynamism and a constant capacity to reinvent itself, continues to be a potent economic force. Small and previously inconspicuous countries such as Rwanda and Vietnam are growing fast to adapt to knowledge imperatives. Without a multicultural background and political stability, we can't leapfrog in development through education.

L'Université Des Mascareignes offers an exciting new potential to attract top international talents to study locally in quality technical education at degree level. That university is conceptualised as a medium-sized, high quality institution, focusing on technology in the disciplines such as engineering, information systems and financial sectors in a first stage. Of course, there will be much more to come at another stage. The University hopes, Mr Speaker, Sir, to produce graduates who are innovators and who can literally bring ideas from scratch on the drawing board into the real economy.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will say that *l'Université Des Mascareignes* will, in due course, become definitely a new peak of excellence in the Mauritian higher education landscape and will become a beacon of technology and innovation in the local regional university sector through its international and multi-disciplinary approach.

Our country, Mr Speaker, Sir, is doing well in the tertiary sector. The education hub is in the making. It is slowly, but surely coming up. Our youth will definitely gain and our country also. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me wish this *Université Des Mascareignes* good luck and well indeed. I wish, again, to reiterate my thanks and congratulations to the Minister for having come forward with this Bill on time and the Prime Minister for his leadership.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(10.54 p.m.)

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka):

M. le président, nous avons ce soir un projet de loi qui a, comme objectif, l'établissement d'une université nommée l'Université Des Mascareignes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are all aware that in this increasingly competitive global world, the success and even the survival of the country depend greatly in the dynamism, the competitiveness, the competence, the creativity and innovative capacity of its cadres and its labour force. And this, in turn, depends on the quality of education dispensed to the population.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it goes without saying that the implementation of universities of high standard cannot, but be welcomed in our island. More so in a country that has set for itself the ambitious objective of becoming a knowledge hub, a centre for higher learning *par excellence*.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the setting up of any university for that matter, must imperatively allow the opening up of new avenues, offering the younger generation and the population at large, new scopes for higher education, training, new possibilities for research and development. Had this been the case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we would have fully supported the setting up of the *Université Des Mascareignes* but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *l'Université Des Mascareignes* Bill, as stated in its Explanatory Memorandum, has, as its primary object, the establishment of a university with a view of taking over the functions of *l'Institut Supérieur de Technologie* and the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management, two well-known institutions which, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will recall, only three years back, were placed under the aegis of the University of Technology, Mauritius by the Minister of Education, hon. Vasant Bunwaree.

This, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, raises a number of queries to my mind. Firstly, what went wrong? If these two institutions were placed under the aegis of the University of Technology, Mauritius, what went wrong and why are we, all of a sudden, changing *notre trajectoire*, M. le président? I still remember how the Minister of Education in 2009 stated, and I quote –

“By joining IST to UTM, the existing international linkage between IST and *l'Université de Limoges* will be rationalised within the high education framework in line with the requirements of European higher education framework. It has been deemed appropriate

for IST and SDIM to be anchored within a university framework. The SDIM will also benefit from the connection with UTM since it already has top-up programs with this institution. The IST, the SDIM falling under the aegis of the UTM will ensure a link between professional and university programs. UTM will run top-up programs which will lead to the award of degree to students.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is what we are saying. The framework was already established. The UTM was going to allow students from these two institutions to come out of university with a degree university. And the point which arises, as I mentioned earlier: what is the rationale behind changing this set up? These two polytechnics are being converted into a full-fledged university when they were already operating under the aegis of UTM. We, on the Opposition side, fully agree that young students should be given the opportunity to complete their studies, to end up with a university degree. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we believe that when we intend to turn Mauritius into a regional knowledge hub, we have to insist. Mauritius already has two full-fledged universities, then it would have been better to do as other countries have done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In England, polytechnics have been upgraded by allowing them to enter the framework of full-fledged universities; by allowing their affiliation to these universities. I can take the example of the London University with 18 institutions affiliated to it and each one of these institutions capable of working on its own, fully autonomous and yet these institutions are affiliated to the University of London. Benchmarking with France will show the same thing.

Let me take the case of India. Let's take the case of the University of Delhi. We have been told earlier, I think, by hon. Dr. Bunwaree that we have to ensure that students manage to get into universities. The hon. Minister mentioned that we are already working at full capacity at the UTM and at the UoM, but the idea of affiliation does not mean that you have to move to Réduit or move to UTM. You can still remain in Pamplémousses or Camp Levieux and the institution can operate under the aegis of these universities. I'll take the case of the University of Delhi in India. The University of Delhi has got more than 79 institutions affiliated to the University of Delhi. Let's look at the size of Delhi. It is around 600 square miles, less than Mauritius, but it has a population of 16.7 million, 14 times that of our Mauritian population. Still they manage to work with all these different colleges and institutions under the aegis of the University of Delhi. This is what is being done elsewhere. This is the best practice around the

world. We can say the same thing for France. Here, in spite of the fact that we have limited resources, we know that we are passing through difficult times - we have heard the Minister of Finance talking of tsunamis - but then why are we right now trying to come up with new institutions just for the sake of setting up new institutions? I'll come back to it later, Mr Speaker, Sir because I feel that the vision for this Ministry is very, very blurred. We don't seem to know where we are heading. We are coming up with haphazard policies and we cannot see the holistic approach that should have been there in a country which is hoping to become a knowledge hub.

As mentioned earlier, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is no need to set up institutions just for the sake of setting up institutions. It is important for us to optimise resources may it be financial resources or for that matter human resources. It would seem more appropriate to anchor or integrate these institutions to either the UTM as it is already or to the University of Mauritius. I have gone through the various objects and functions of the UTM. It seems to be very, very much alike those stated in the Bill for *l'Université Des Mascareignes*. I have also noted that *l'Université Des Mascareignes* is hoping to set up research centres, to develop research, to carry out research, to offer consultancy to public/private bodies, to the industrial and commercial sectors, but for this to happen, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we need to have a culture of research. This has to be developed. It does not come up overnight. The integration of these institutions to already full-fledged universities would have allowed these institutions to grow and develop these specialities. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I'll come back later to see what actually is the reason behind the setting up of this new University but, before doing so, I would like to go to the Bill and take up certain clauses which give me worries. Let us come to clause 6 of the Bill –

“6. Powers of *Université des Mascareignes*

The *Université des Mascareignes* shall have such powers as are necessary to attain its objects and discharge its functions most effectively and may, in particular –

(d) operate in partnership with other institutions;”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, nowhere in this Bill do they give any description of the types of institutions with which *l'Université des Mascareignes* would undergo partnership. Further, when we move on to section (f) of part 6, it becomes really more worrying. Let us look at this.

“f) enter, in such manner as it may determine, into agreements with any other institution, including an agreement providing for the

incorporation within the *Université des Mascareignes* of any other institution.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wonder what is the role of the Tertiary Education Commission. Shouldn't there be certain standards established? Can *l'Université des Mascareignes* enter into agreements, allowing incorporation within the university of any other institution without any qualification, any sort of description of what type of institution that might be? And this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, without imputing motives, gives me certain ideas. Are we talking about private institutions which will be incorporated in *l'Université des Mascareignes*? Then, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I move on to clause 7 which deals with the admission of students, it says -

“7. Admission of students

(1) (...) the *Université des Mascareignes* shall be open to all persons.”

And then when it goes to clause 2, it states –

“(2) Nothing in subsection (1) shall require the *Université des Mascareignes* to (...).”

Amongst others, of course. I move on to subclause (c) -

“(c) admit or retain any student whose conduct is prejudicial to its interests, or the rights and privileges of other students or of the staff of the *Université des Mascareignes*.”

M. le président, c'est troublant parce que je ne comprends pas comment on peut se permettre de *discriminate* de cette façon là sur les enfants. Quel genre de discrimination est-ce qu'on est en train d'avoir ici? Sachant que nous avons voté *the Equal Opportunities Bill* et que cela a été proclamé on se demande si ce genre de clause ne mettrait pas mal à l'aise tous ces jeunes qui décideront de bouger et d'aller vers cette institution. Ce n'est pas tout, M. le président. Ce qui est encore plus tracassant c'est la clause 38.

Clause 38 subclause 8 refers to Transitional Provisions -

“38. Transitional provisions

(8)(a) Any person employed on the permanent and pensionable establishment of the IST or the SDIM, against whom disciplinary proceedings are pending at the commencement of this Act –

- (ii) who is interdicted, shall be transferred to the permanent and pensionable establishment of the *Université des Mascareignes*, where following the completion of the disciplinary proceedings, he is reinstated in the office he held at the time of his interdiction; and
- (iii) where, upon the reinstatement under subparagraph (ii), no vacancy exists at the *Université des Mascareignes*, that person shall be deemed to have retired on ground of abolition of office and he shall be paid all his pension benefits.”

Mais on se fiche de la tête des gens, M. le président. Comment est-ce qu'on peut se permettre de dire qu'une personne a été *reinstated* et par la suite dans la même ligne dire qu'elle sera considérée comme ayant pris sa retraite parce qu'il n'y a pas de vacance à l'université des Mascareignes ? *Je sais qu'il y a un* Labour Minister who keeps on saying that the Employment Rights Bill is not correct and that amendments should be brought to it, but we are having a new Bill in this Assembly which is totally discriminatory against the workers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, further, we find that if a person who has been transferred from l'Institut Supérieur de Technologie or the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management to the Université des Mascareignes and finds that his job or job title has been altered, that person will not be entitled to make claims against the University. Now, this is most undemocratic and I wonder what type of Bill we are passing here in a country which is stating that it has voted an Equal Opportunities Bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I won't go lengthily on all the points that my colleague, hon. Obeegadoo, has already mentioned. But what I am worried about is the total lack of vision of the Ministry, the haphazard manner in which we are coming up with measures which seem to be measures taken in haste. I wonder why this haste of setting up a university when this very Government, a few years back, had taken these two institutions and integrated them in the University of Technology, Mauritius. Why suddenly this urge, to set up l'Université des Mascareignes? Again, I do not want to impute motives. But is this a way for the Minister to leave his imprint on the tertiary sector by just coming up with a university so that tomorrow he might state: "I have brought this new university to the Republic of Mauritius"?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as mentioned by my colleague, let us not lure ourselves. We will not overnight turn these two institutions into a full-fledged university. The very fact that after having passed a Bill twice in this very Assembly, the Open University of Mauritius has still not taken off after several years? In 2005 and 2009, two Bills voted in this Assembly and yet we all know that the Open University of Mauritius has not taken off yet. We, therefore, cannot think that just by changing the appellation of two institutions, calling them universities, that we will turn them into full-fledged universities and all of a sudden students will start moving into this university.

To come back to what hon. Dr. Bunwaree had mentioned, we are not saying that we should send these children to the already crowded UTM or University of Mauritius. These institutions can still operate where they are and be affiliated to the university. It is not now that students of these institutions will start having degrees. I have been told that there are about 60 students at the UTM who have already obtained their university degrees from the UTM. I think by just mentioning that now students would be able to get their degrees, now lecturers who were trainers, who were at the IST or the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management, will become lecturers, now that these people would manage to upgrade their jobs, that we will have a full-fledged university.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Tertiary Education and the hon. Minister of Education also have failed to convince us on this particular issue and we feel very strongly that there is a need to review the vision that we have for the tertiary sector in Mauritius. We need to be true to ourselves, we need to be true to the people of Mauritius, to the youth in this country. We need to show them that when we intend to take measures to help them, to allow them to get better scopes for their higher education, we are doing it in the right way, not just for the sake of saying: "Here I am, I have been able to establish a university in Mauritius; I have done my job as a Minister for Tertiary Education." We need to review the whole thing and we need to be true to ourselves and, as patriots, come up with measures that will indeed help our country to move forward, help Mauritius to become the knowledge hub that it has planned to become and, obviously, this can only be done if we all put our heads together and work out with sincerity, not just for the sake of leaving an institution and saying: "this is what I have contributed to the sector."

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(11.16 p.m.)

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to thank the hon. Members for their participation in the debate. I would like to first start by stating that listening to my two friends from the Opposition, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchmoomun and hon. Obeegadoo, I asked myself a question: “Which planet are these people from? Which country are they living in?” Now it appears to me that they are totally out of touch.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please!

Dr. Jeetah: They do not understand at all what is happening at IST and SDIM. Now, I am being called dangerous by hon. Obeegadoo and I like that. If creating a university makes one dangerous, but there is more to come, Sir.

The other hon. Member wants us to move forward, but very slowly. This is not my style, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Listening to hon. Obeegadoo, the problem, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me! I am on my feet! I would like to remind the hon. Members that they intervened almost uninterrupted. I would request you to remain silent and allow the Minister to do his summing-up.

(Interruptions)

I have already given my ruling.

(Interruptions)

I want a complete silence, please!

Dr. Jeetah: I would like to refer hon. Obeegadoo to his speech on 21 March 2000 and I had the opportunity to read what he had to say. Reading the speech of 21 March 2000 and listening to him today does not make any difference. Let me remind him of what he said. He was intervening during the debate for the creation of the UTM. *Regardez ce qu'il avait à dire –*

“Let us look at the UTM itself. Expliquez-moi la logique, M. le président, d'intégrer la MIPAM au l'UTM plutôt qu'à l'Université de Maurice.”

Exactly the same stuff that he just talked today!

“What does MIPAM have to do with technology alors qu'il existe une faculté de Law and Management depuis des années à l'université de Maurice qui a fait ses preuves ?”

Today, he is suggesting the same, that these two institutions cannot be merged into a university. He goes on, and he was referring to the then Minister of Education, Mr Chedumbarum Pillay. I quote -

“You have no strategic vision which has been enunciated, you have no White Paper which has been published and yet you want to rush ahead and create this very same department in a new UTM.”

And this very same UTM today has 6,000 students and more! I quote –

“M. le président, la nouvelle université va opérer donc dans un vide stratégique.”

I think he has learned these few words by heart and he keeps on saying that, and he is so pompous. I made a few collections of words that I would like to describe the way he said things. I think he got a bit personal, I think he was factitious, he was pompous and this is what we call “high-sounding nothing”. *Et qu’est-ce qu’il avait dit –*

“M. le président, la nouvelle université va opérer donc dans un vide stratégique mais il n’y a pas que cela. Comment va se concrétiser cette université (...)”

Today, this very same University has 6,000 students. Had we listened to the hon. Member, what would have happened today in Mauritius? No University of Technology! Everything they criticise, what they have done! The MMM has been against free education, free transportation, now, against the creation of a new university. I would like to congratulate hon. Mrs Ribot and hon. Nagalingum for their presence because, I think, they come from Constituency No. 19. But where is the hon. Leader of the Opposition when we are debating about a project in his constituency today?

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think we have to know ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: Hon. Bérenger is shining by his absence in this House.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! It’s enough now, let the hon. Minister continue!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I listened to hon. Obeegadoo very attentively. What is he suggesting? Hon. Obeegadoo is suggesting that we ought to have a world-class

university. Do you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he presided over a world class failure as the most incompetent Minister of Education since 2000.

(Interruptions)

Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one most incompetent Minister of Education!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Hon. Jhugroo, order, please! Let the Minister continue, please!

Dr. Jeetah: I was saying, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the most incompetent Minister of Education since 2000!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: It's enough, let the hon. Minister continue!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, I need to say this.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I was saying, hon. Obeegadoo has proven himself to be the most incompetent Minister of Education since 2000. If I am allowed, I need to share these figures to prove my point. In the year 2000, there was 64.4% pass at CPE; in 2001: 65.3%; in 2002 - 64.9%; 2003 - 62.6%. Had he stayed there, it would have been catastrophic for our young kids. And this gentleman here is giving lessons. Nothing to learn from him!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - *ingérence politique à l'Université de Maurice*. Let us for a moment just think about the University of Mauritius. How does one intervene politically? Do we understand the process of admitting a student at the University of Mauritius? Is there anybody here who can change the grades of a student at the University of Mauritius? But I know for a fact that this cannot be done. Nobody can influence admission to begin with. Neither myself nor hon. Obeegadoo, nobody could do that. So, the students get admitted at the University of Mauritius on their merits. How does the University function? There are Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Associate Professors, and Professors. Who actually promotes the faculty members? There is what we call an FPAC which is actually a peer review system whereby an Assistant Lecturer or Lecturer gets promoted and becomes a Senior Lecturer. There is no way that we could have interference there. The same applies at the Associate Professor level.

Now, with regard to the professorial level, the promotion assessment is not even considered locally. The assessment is made by three external professors. The hon. Member made reference to Associate Professor Driver who has been assessed by three external Professors from overseas. We do not even know who these Professors are. There is no single Mauritian person who assesses a Professor in this country. Maybe the hon. Member is not aware, but he has to know. Stop University bashing! You cannot interfere even if you wanted to. *Ce n'est même pas possible*. Do you know how the examination system works? There is a Board of Examiners where you have all heads of departments, all deans of faculties. You have external examiners. How do you control external examiners? There is no way that you could do that. I need to say something to the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Hon. Obeegadoo has stated that we need to have a UoM fit for purpose. What does he mean? Is he suggesting that it is unfit for purpose? If this is what he means, he has to apologise to 12,000 students.

(Interruptions)

He has to apologise to their parents. He has to apologise! He cannot cast aspersions because he does not like the Labour party, because we are creating a university in Camp Levieux which he never did. He never did anything in education!

(Interruptions)

Just name me one University!

(Interruptions)

University of Mauritius, University of Technology, Open University, FDI. Where were you? I did make a note.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, Order, please!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, rumours had it that when he was Minister, he was going to bring Birla, Manipal, Singapore and IIT Mumbai here. But he achieved nothing! It is the Labour Government that has done everything. Just go and look! Where there is education, there is the imprint of the Labour party, now, with PMSD as an ally. *40 ans vous avez été ici, nommez-moi une institution que vous avez créée ?*

(Interruptions)

What have you done for Camp Levieux ? *Si ce n'est pas une insulte !* Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, do you know why I find it insulting from the part of the MMM?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today, the people of this country have to take serious note of what the MMM has said: they are against a University in Camp Levieux. *Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire? Are les enfants de Ste Anne, Trèfles, Plaisance, Camp Levieux, Cité Barkly* second-class citizens in their mind? Go and think about it, gentlemen, tonight ! *Qu'est-ce qu'ils ont fait pendant 40 ans?* Go and have a look at Barkly! I lived there, I know the place!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! I want some silence in the House, both sides! Please, carry on!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to come back to this ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle, please! Hon. Jhugroo!

Dr. Jeetah: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was a concern. I think that this may be a genuine concern from hon. Obeegadoo who suggested that there may be a need to review the definition of the 'Academic Staff'. But I have been informed by members of the SLO that this does not imply that a person who teaches cannot do research or that a researcher cannot teach. What it does mean is that a researcher or a research assistant who does not teach will be considered as...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Hossen!

Dr. Jeetah: ...academic and not general staff. I hope this brings some light to his concern.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Hossen! Keep silent, please!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have heard many times that the Opposition has a great concern with quality. I have to say this again; there used to be a time when just a few could afford it economically, could go to good schools and pass their SC and HSC and so on. Today, this is natural in Mauritius and in 10 to 15 years' time or maybe even before that, it will become natural for our kids to go to university. In the same way that we started the UTM with about

1,000 students, there was MIPAM and another institution that were merged together. This institution as well is going to start from very humble beginnings. *C'est ce qui est important* and he did not even mention *l'Université de Limoges* which is not an institution that is driven by any local party here. This is an institution which has proven itself. As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that we need in this country a tertiary education institution based on the French system and I do not have any doubts...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, keep silent, please! Keep silent please, I am talking to you!

(Interruptions)

I am talking to you for the time being. I will talk to them as well. You remain silent, please. Hon. Hossen, please remain silent! This is for the last time that I am warning you!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was a concern about clause (7)(c). This clause, I must say, refers to students who have been subject to disciplinary action and cannot be retained at the University. It is not a discriminatory provision. There was also reference to clause (38) whereby employees are offered the option to join the University or to be redeployed to another institution. It is only if they do not accept the two options that the abolition of their posts is resorted to. This is a last resort. However, we guarantee that no employee will be made redundant. The provisions for staff appeal do exist in all legislations creating new institutions. They guarantee the right of employees.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Dr. Jeetah: The development of this University is in line with international trends.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Dr. Jeetah: In the UK, I must say, polytechnics have been upgraded into universities. This is for the benefit of hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun who had a concern about this. It is normal for institutions, after a period of maturity, to be upgraded to university status. We do not take these things lightly. The two institutions which are being merged into the *Université Des Mascareignes* have now existed for more than 14 years. I have said it in my Second Reading; they have contributed immensely to training of high-calibre middle level technicians and professionals. It is legitimate that they should aspire to become universities in their own right. It

is not because hon. Obeegadoo does not want to do it that we should follow his path. It is probably the first University offering a blend of Anglo-Saxon and Francophone systems of education working in collaboration with the *Université de Limoges*. The Opposition has been putting forward the issue of quality as a pretext to oppose the expansion of tertiary education. No wonder they have been in Opposition for nearly 40 years! They have been against every good action that this Government is taking. They want to create the impression that they are the only ones concerned with quality and for them quality means just sitting idle and doing nothing, keep on increasing the number of failed students in this country, as I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Let me repeat the same information to the House that Government, my Ministry in particular and all stakeholders in the tertiary education sector attach great importance to the issue of quality. There is no compromise on the quality of education. As I said, in any case, politicians do not have any say on what actually happens there. This depends on the faculty members and they have their peer reviews. There are audits being conducted by the Tertiary Education Commission. I did mention that the hon. Member pretended not to hear what I said. No one can doubt the quality of the professionals coming out of our tertiary education system. In fact, we should give them due recognition for their contribution to the various sectors of the economy - ICT, textiles, financial services, as I said earlier on.

This country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, still produces nearly 150 million pieces of garments. If it was not for the quality of the people at all levels, graduates, managers and operatives, we would not have been able to stand on our feet in the field of textiles. I did mention that we have done very well in the financial services sector because we have trained quality graduates who are doing a marvellous job there. The same applies to the ICT sector. In a period of few years this sector is now the third largest contributor to the GDP of this country. Do the hon. Members of the Opposition have doubts about the quality of these professionals, many of whom are Members of this House and who have qualified from our local tertiary institutions? Here again, I would like to reiterate what hon. Obeegadoo said about the University of Mauritius being 'unfit for purpose'. I think that he should seriously consider apologising to the 12,000 students. He must do that. They cannot just cast aspersions on an institution which has built modern Mauritius. Neither I nor they own the University of Mauritius! This is the property of all the people of this country.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister kindly address the Chair!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, does hon. Obeegadoo realise that in systematically criticising our tertiary education institutions he is trying to cast doubts on the integrity of these institutions and instill some discomfort and lack of confidence in the students? This is cheap politics! The job market has proved him to be totally wrong as employees recognise the value and potential of these graduates.

We moved from a GDP per capita in 2000 of 3,900 US dollars to almost 9,000 US dollars in 2011. This country is ranked among the top five on the basis of several indicators and has, as I said earlier on, a Human Development Index of 0.728, ranking 77 in the world. This is precisely because of the quality of graduates that we have produced in this country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the challenge of increasing access will be one of creating and stimulating new demand for tertiary education from non-traditional learners while ensuring that all Mauritians qualified to undertake tertiary education are able to do so. Innovative measures have already been introduced in the sector in this regard relating to -

- (i) foundation programmes for learners with only one A level;
- (ii) admission of mature students for tertiary education;
- (iii) recognition of prior learning for admission of learners in tertiary education;
- (iv) for provision of scholarship and Government sponsored loans to disadvantaged students under the Human Resource Knowledge and Arts Development Fund.

I have to say it very clearly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very proud to be part of this Government, along with this wonderful team, which has been at the forefront of all major developments in the education sector. You just have to name it and you will find the imprint of the Labour Party in the field of education. This applies equally to higher education as all the major institutions that have been set up by either this Government or by Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam. We have this vision of the hon. Prime Minister for the development of Tertiary Education and we are not going to be deflected from our goals by sterile criticisms. We are on the right track and history has always proved that any development in education is for the benefit of the nation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill is about the future of our youth. We are preparing the future human resources of this country. This is in line with the great vision that Sir Seewoosagar

Ramgoolam had for education, under his leadership a solid foundation has been laid and we have benefited from a rich legacy. Similarly, under the leadership of the present Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, we are building on this foundation to widen opportunities in higher education for future generations. This is our legacy to them.

I thank you for your attention, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

THE UNIVERSITÉ DES MASCAREIGNES BILL

(NO. III OF 2012)

Clauses 1 to 36 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 37 (Consequential amendments)

Motion made and question proposed: "that the clause stand part of the Bill".

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I move that, in this clause, subclause (2)(a) be deleted and replaced by the following subclause -

“(2) (a) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act is amended -

(i) in the First Schedule, in Part I, by inserting, in the appropriate alphabetical order, the following new item with its corresponding entry -

Université des Mascareignes Université des Mascareignes
Act 2012

(ii) in the Second Schedule, in Part I, by inserting, in the appropriate alphabetical order, the following new item with its corresponding entry -

Université des Mascareignes Université des Mascareignes
Act 2012”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 37, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 38 to 39 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The Schedule ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Université Des Mascareignes Bill (No. III of 2012) was read the third time and passed.

The Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal Bill (No. IV of 2012)

The hon. Attorney General (Mr Y. Varma) gave notice of his intention not to move the second reading and the other stages of the Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal Bill (No. IV of 2012) today.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 22 May 2012 at 11.30 a.m.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 11.48 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 22 May 2012 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

JINFEI INDUSTRIAL PROJECT – STATE LANDS

(No. B/65) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Jinfei Industrial Project, he will state where matters stand, indicating if Government will consider taking back the state lands allocated therefor.

Reply (The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development): As the House is aware, a revised Framework Agreement was signed in September 2009 between the Government of Mauritius and the promoters of the Jinfei project. Under this agreement, an

extent of 211 *hectares* has been leased for the development of the Jinfei Economic Trade and Cooperation Zone.

In the light of discussions, it has been agreed that the project needed to be re-engineered to position the Jinfei Zone as a special economic zone with more emphasis on the services sector and light manufacturing. In addition, foreign investment will be allowed not only from China, but from any foreign country. The Zone will operate as a service centre to interact with Africa. This service centre will offer, inter alia, facilities for firms with operations in Africa to open their regional headquarters in Mauritius and appropriate structures for capacity building initiatives for the region.

In order to coordinate matters and review progress on the project, a Joint Steering committee has been set up under my Chairmanship and a first meeting was held on 05 April 2012.

The Committee comprises the Jinfei promoters, the Chinese Embassy, representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Housing and Lands as well as officials of my Ministry and the Board of investment.

We believe that the Joint Steering Committee is an important forum to enable Jinfei promoters to better manage the project and improve the marketing of the Zone. This Committee will also facilitate project implementation by addressing project bottlenecks. Accordingly, the question of taking back the State lands allocated under the project does not arise.

LABOUR LAWS – AMENDMENTS

(No. B/87) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the proposed amendments to be brought to the labour laws, as recommended by a Government High Powered Committee set up to look thereinto, he will state if he has been informed of the decision of the trade unions of the private sector to reject same and, if so, will he consider meeting the representatives of the said trade unions.

Reply: As at date, I have not been informed of the decision of Trade Unions of the private sector, rejecting the proposed amendments to the Employment Rights Act and Employment Relations Act as recommended by the High Powered Committee.

However, in a letter dated 4 May 2012 addressed to Dr the hon. Prime Minister, a copy of which has been transmitted to me, the Confédération Syndicale De Gauche (CSG Solidarité) requested for an official meeting to discuss their contentions on the proposed amendments. In its letter, the CSG Solidarité has not rejected the proposed amendments but has highlighted contentions on five specific issues.

I wish to inform the House that following consultations and submissions of various memoranda from both workers and employers organisations, the High Powered Committee endorsed a series of proposed amendments to the labour laws, which I announced publicly at a press conference on 23 April 2012.

I will meet both workers and employers organisations in due course.

MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE – REPO RATE - LEAKAGES

(No. B/88) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Monetary Policy Committee, he will –

- (a) state if
 - (i) a due diligence exercise had been carried out on the members thereof appointed by him, prior to their appointment;
 - (ii) he has been informed of the leakage of the decision on the repo rate at the first meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee and the consequences thereof, and
 - (iii) the nominees' vote for the reduction of the repo rate reflected the policy stand of Government, and
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the actions taken to avoid leakages in the future.

Reply: Regarding part (a)(i) of the question, in December 2011, the composition of the Monetary Policy Committee was reviewed and in terms of Section 54(1) of the Bank of Mauritius Act 2004 (as amended), the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is now made up of the following 9 members namely the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius who is the Chairperson of the Committee; three senior officers of the Bank appointed by the Governor, with responsibility

for, respectively, economic research, monetary policy operations and day to day administration of the Bank; and 5 other persons, not being Directors or employees of the Bank, having recognised experience in the field of economics, banking or finance, appointed by the Minister of Finance, after consultation with the Governor.

Due diligence prior to the appointment by the Governor of the three senior officers was not required as they are all serving officers of the Bank.

The other five members are highly reputed professionals who have vast and rich experiences in the fields of economics, Banking or Finance. They are namely, Mr Pierre Dinan, Mr Kamal Taposseea, Mr Nishan Degnarain, Mr Alain Madelin, and Ms Sylvana Tenreyro.

Mr Pierre Dinan, who is a Chartered Accountant, also holds a BSc Economics from the London School of Economics. He is a well-known figure in the Business Sector. He has been a member of the Monetary Policy Committee since 2007 and he has been reappointed as a member.

In the case of Mr Kamal Taposseea, he is the Chairman of the Board of Air Mauritius Ltd. and was previously CEO of Barclays Bank.

Mr Nishan Degnarain holds a BSc Economic and Geography from the University of Cambridge and a Masters in Public Administration in International Development from the Harvard University. He has been working at McKinsey & Company.

Mr Alain Madelin is a well-known personality in France and has held a number of key ministerial posts at the highest level. Among others he has been Minister of Economy and Finance.

Ms Sylvana Tenreyro is Professor in Economics at the London School of Economics. She has been an Economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. She holds a PhD in Economics and a Masters of Arts from Harvard University.

Due diligence has been carried out on all the members.

As regards, Part (a)(ii) of the question, since the first interest-rate setting meeting of the MPC on 30 June 2007, it has been the standard practice to announce the decision on the Key Repo Rate via a communiqué released on the Bank's website at 18.00 hours on the day of the meeting.

It was reported to the Bank that a media website had already announced the decision of the Key Repo Rate, which was under embargo, some fifteen minutes prior to the publication of

the related communiqué on the Bank's website on 19 March 2012. During a Press Conference held at the Bank on 20 March 2012, the Governor announced that the matter was being referred to the Police for investigation and an investigation in the matter is currently underway.

Concerning part (a) (iii) of the question, the Ministry discusses, internally, on what our policy stance on Monetary Policy should be. We express our views on what we consider should be the direction of the Key Repo Rate and its level. This is why the Ministry of Finance has a non-voting observer who participates in the MPC meeting. The Ministry thus expresses its views to the Bank of Mauritius, and also to other members of the Committee. Other stakeholders in the economy do the same, and I suppose through the Press. However, the members of the Monetary Policy Committee are by law independent and are not directed by the Ministry of Finance on how to vote. All members of the MPC, regardless of by whom they are appointed, are expected to maintain their independence and should not be directed or controlled.

At the same time the unanimous decision by all nine members of the Monetary Policy Committee to lower the Key Repo Rate is in line with what the Ministry of Finance was expecting and in line with the assessment of the IMF in its last two Article IV reports.

The action of the MPC in cutting rates by 50 basis points at its last meeting is also consistent with a monetary policy that supports the current fiscal policy. Fiscal policy is aiming at both medium term consolidation through a reduction of our debt burden relative to GDP and a short term economic stimulus to consolidate growth resilience in the face of the euro crisis. Moreover, the reduction in interest rates is consistent with our policy to lighten the interest charge of companies that could face hardship. It is also consistent with our policy to make finance accessible and affordable to thousands of micro, small and medium sized enterprises that are struggling through the difficult times. Finally, it is also consistent with our policies to lower the cost of borrowing to consumers so that they can improve their purchasing power and their standard of living.

In fact, the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry just reviewed its forecast of GDP growth for 2012 upward to 3.9 percent. One of the factors underlying this upward revision is the successive lowering of the Key Repo Rate.

We believe that the unanimous decision of the Monetary Policy Committee to lower the key repo rate was appropriate and in line with the analysis of the IMF.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that it takes every measure to combat all leakage, including the MPC decision. According to Section 26 of the Bank of Mauritius Act 2004, all Bank staff must sign an oath/declaration of confidentiality before beginning to perform any duties under the banking laws. Members of the MPC are also required to sign a declaration of confidentiality when they are appointed.

The Bank also carries a close monitoring of its IT system to prevent information leaking out

SUPERTOTE & TOTELEPEP - POOLS

(No. B/89) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Supertote and the Totelepep, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to if it has approved the commingling of the pools thereof and, if so, indicate the conditions attached thereto, if any.

Reply: I am informed that the Commingling of pools between the two Totalisator companies namely Automatic Systems Ltd and Globalsports Ltd operating under the trade names 'Supertote' and 'Totelepep' respectively, was approved by the Gaming Regulatory Board on 13 September 2011 after it had obtained confirmation from the Competition Commission of Mauritius (CCM) that the proposed commingling would not lead to any infringement to the provisions of the Competition Act 2007.

Both 'Supertote' and 'Totelepep' have to comply strictly with the undertakings signed on 11 August 2011 by them and the CCM.

Accordingly I am tabling a copy of the letter of authorisation issued by the Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA) and also the decision of the CCM where the principal undertakings made by the companies to the commission are stated.

STC – POWDERED MILK - IMPORTS

(No. B/90) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to powdered milk, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation,

information as to the different imports thereof undertaken, since 2005 to-date, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) quantity thereof
- (b) trade name thereof
- (c) country of origin thereof
- (d) amount of money spent therefor, and
- (e) selling price thereof on the local market.

Reply: I am informed by the State Trading Corporation (STC) that since 2005, the Corporation imported a total of 235.5tons of Milk Powder.

Regarding parts (a), (b), (c) and (e) of the question, I wish to inform the House as follows

	Date	(a) Quantity in Metric Tons	(b) Trade name	(c) Country of Origin	(d) Landed cost	(e) Selling price per kg wholesale/retail (Rs)
1	October 2005	45 (3750 x 12 x 1kg)	Amul Full Cream Milk Powder	India (Gujarat Cooperative)	Rs3,706,080	88.69/93.06
2	November 2005	25 (1000 x 25 kg)	Agri Best	Australia	Rs1,930,900	81.17/86.40 2,029.25/2,160.00 (per bag of 25 kg)
3	November 2005	30 (2500 x 12 x 1 kg)	Amul Full Cream Milk Powder	India (Gujarat Cooperative)	Rs2,469,701	88.69/93.06
4	December 2005	81 (6750 X 12 x 1)	Amul Full	India (Gujarat	Rs6,697,651	88.69/93.06

		kg)	Cream Milk Powder	Cooperative)		
5	December 2007	14.5 (580 x 25 kg)	Oasis Full Cream Milk Powder	China (Qingdao United Dairy Co Ltd.)	Rs1,509,653	116.60/121.49 2,915.00/3,030.00 (per bag of 25 kg)
6	April 2008	40 (1666 x 24 x 500 gm)	Oasis Full Cream Milk Powder	China (Qingdao United Dairy Co Ltd.)	Rs3,797,170	
TOTAL					Rs20,111,155	

LIGHT RAIL TRANSPORT PROJECT

(No. B/91) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Light Rail Transport project, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the Private Notice Question in December 2010 with regard to the Metro Leger Project.

The introduction of a Mass Transit System (MTS) is one among the many major projects that will be implemented by this Government. In our programme for 2012 – 2015 we announced that an infrastructure project with significant potential for people and business is the creation of a major nationwide Mass Transit System. Work on the first phase of the MTS – the Light Rail Transit – will start by 2013. This project will eventually connect the whole island.

The Singaporean Co-operation Enterprise (SCE) has submitted a proposal which would cover Project Management Services consisting of:

- (i) determination of a feasible alignment for the whole LRT corridor running between Curepipe and Port Louis;

- (ii) economic analysis, including financial structuring, for the implementation of the LRT system;
- (iii) development of concept and preliminary design sufficient to attract market interest in the project from suitably qualified delivery entities and to invite priced tenders from the entities; and
- (iv) high level consideration of potential future northbound and southbound extension to the Curepipe to Port Louis corridor.

I wish to inform the hon Member that only two weeks ago, Cabinet decided to carry out a due diligence exercise on the proposal made by the SCE for the implementation of a Light Rail Transit System in Mauritius with the collaboration of the Government of Singapore.

The hon. Member is surely aware that in accordance with the Public Procurement Act, a due diligence should be carried to ensure value for money deliverable for goods and services project driven through a Government to Government procurement.

The Committee set up for the purpose has already started its work and will submit its report in one month. This Report will have to be validated by an expert in the field, who is being identified.

I wish to assure the hon. Member that the first “*coup de pioche*” for this dream project is expected next year.

LA ROUTE DU SUCRE – CUREPIPE/FLOREAL - HAZARDS

(No. B/92) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to *La Route du Sucre*, particularly on the strip thereof between the Curepipe Road and the Floréal Petrol Station, he will state if his attention has been drawn to the high risks of accident prevailing thereat, and if so, indicate if consideration will be given for measures to be taken to minimise the risks.

Reply: The “La Route du Sucre”, that is, Sivananda Avenue from its junction with Phoenix - Plaisance Road and Floréal Road is considered as a black spot.

In order to minimise the risks of accident thereat and to enhance safety, the following measures have been taken by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of my Ministry -

- (i) both the pedestrian crossing near Charles Regnaud Lane and the junction at Monseigneur Barry/Riviere Seche have been signalised;
- (ii) See through handrails have been installed at the same corner with Sivananda Avenue;
- (iii) footpaths have been constructed in settlement areas for the safety of pedestrians, and
- (iv) road markings have been effected and speed limits signs of 60 km/h have been posted.

Furthermore, my Ministry is seriously envisaging the installation of a speed camera there to deter speeding.

YOUTH CENTRES - USE - ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

(No. B/93) Mrs P. Bholah (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Youth Centres, he will state the eligibility criteria for the use thereof for the carrying out of activities by members of the public.

(Withdrawn)

JONCTION, PAILLES - CENTRE POLYVALENT

(No. B/94) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Centre Polyvalent, at Jonction, Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whom the management thereof has been entrusted.

Reply: I am informed that the basement and first floor of the Polyvalent Centre at Jonction, Pailles are managed by the Black River District Council for the provision of indoor game activities to the inhabitants of the region.

I am further informed that the whole ground floor area has been put at the disposal of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for the setting up of a Health Centre.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SECURITY PREMISES - OLD-AGED PERSON - PASSED OUT

(No. B/95) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the old-aged person who passed out whilst being on the premises of the Ministry of

Social Security, on Monday 7 April 2012, she will state if an inquiry has been carried out into the circumstances and causes thereof and if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

TOBACCO INDUSTRY (LOCAL) - WORKERS AND STAKEHOLDERS - INTERESTS

(No. B/96) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the local tobacco industry, he will state the steps taken by Government to safeguard the interests of the workers and those of the stakeholders thereof, following the decision of the British American Tobacco to stop purchasing tobacco leaves on the local market.

Reply: As the House may be aware, following the closure of the British American Tobacco (BAT) factory, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in year 2009 between the BAT and the Tobacco Board which stipulates that the BAT would purchase tobacco leaves till the year 2015.

The BAT has now made a request to purchase tobacco leaves up to December 2012 and has also proposed to pay compensation to the growers. Discussions are ongoing between the BAT, growers and the Tobacco Board on the quantum of compensation.

I am informed by the Tobacco Board that workers employed by growers are either full time or seasonal workers who do not work solely in the tobacco plantation but also in the sugar cane and vegetable plantations. They are, therefore, fully employed.

As regards employees of the Tobacco Board, my Ministry is looking into the possibilities of redeploying them in the public sector.

CEB - EMPLOYEES - TRANSFER

(No. B/97) Mrs P. Bholah (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to the number of employees who have been transferred from their respective posting, since January 2012 to-date, indicating in each case, the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

PANCHAVATI, RIVIERE DU REMPART – PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL

(No. B/98) Mrs P. Bholah (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to Panchavati, found in the district of Rivière du Rempart, he will -

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Empowerment

Foundation, information as to the social assistance brought to the needy people living thereat, if any, indicating the amount of money disbursed, since August 2011 to date, and

(b) state where matters stand regarding the setting up of a pre-primary school thereat.

(Withdrawn)

**CITE MICHAEL LEAL & CITE DURGAHEED, PAILLES - FOOTBALL
GROUND**

(No. B/99) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the football ground situated between Cité Michael Leal and Cité Durgaheed, in Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whom the management thereof has been entrusted, indicating if the football team of the locality will be granted access thereto.

Reply: I wish at the very outset to inform the House that the so-called football ground situated between Cité Michael Leal and Cité Durgaheed in Pailles is not a football ground per se, but a playing field whereat teenagers of the region practice football. In fact the plot of State land on which stands the playing field is only 150 sq ft x 80 sq ft and is not according to standard.

I am informed that this plot of State land was formerly being used for dumping of waste and my Ministry decided in year 2009 to clean same, fence and convert it into a playing field for the benefit of the youngsters of that region.

I am further advised that football teams of the locality do not use this playing field as there already exists two football grounds at Morcellement Raffray and St Louis Street.

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS - LEGAL ADVISERS &
ATTORNEYS AT LAW**

(No. B/100) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Legal Advisers and Attorneys at Law whose services have been retained by the Municipal

Council of Port Louis, since 20 November 2010 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names thereof, indicating, in each case -

- (a) since when;
- (b) the terms and conditions on which their services have been retained, and
- (c) the total amount of retainer or any other fees which have been paid to them.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the City Council of Port Louis and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as same will be available.

ROCHE BOIS - QUARTIER SHELL REGION - PEDESTRIAN FLYOVER

(No. B/101) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Quartier Shell region, in Roche Bois, he will state if he is aware of the inconveniences caused to pedestrians due to the absence of a pedestrian flyover on the motorway and, if so, if remedial measures will be taken, indicating when.

Reply: I am aware of the problem being encountered by pedestrians in the Quartier Shell region, in Roche Bois.

In the context of the Road Decongestion Programme, the whole area between Quay D roundabout and Mer Rouge roundabout will be subject to grade separation to cater for the merging of the harbour bridge with motorway M2. Due consideration will be given to the design and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure safe pedestrian movement.

The bid evaluation exercise for the recruitment of a Service Provider for the PPP Road Decongestion Programme is ongoing.

ABATTOIR ROAD, ROCHE BOIS – POLICE QUARTERS

(No. A/33) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Police quarters located at the Abattoir Road, Roche Bois,

he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if they are in an abandoned state and, if so, indicate the remedial steps that will be taken in relation thereto or if any project has been identified to be implemented thereat.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that the Police quarters situated at the Abattoir Road, Roche Bois consist of three blocks designated as A, B and C housing a total of 20 residential units. They are unoccupied, and according to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping the quarters are beyond economical repairs and should be pulled down.

The Police Department is proposing to use the land thereat for development project in respect of the Metropolitan North Division.

Temporarily, Block B has been released to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for the setting up of a new Methadone Drop-in-Centre for Harm Reduction Programme.

ABERCROMBIE POLICE STATION – POLICE QUARTERS

(No. A/34) **Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the project for the pulling down of the Police quarters situated at the Abercrombie Police Station and the replacement thereof by a new modern building, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the procedures have already been initiated therefor and, if so, where matters stand.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that procedures have already been initiated for the construction of a new modern complex at Abercrombie to house the Metropolitan (North) Divisional Headquarters. It will be located on the premises of the existing Police quarters which will be pulled down. Necessary procedures for clearance to pull down the Police quarters and the preparation of the lay out plan for the project have started.

The project has already been included in the Mauritius Police Force Programme Based Budget Strategic Plan 2012-2014.

ROSE HILL POLICE STATION – POLICE QUARTERS

(No. A/35) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Police quarters situated in the compound of the Rose Hill Police Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the Occupational Safety and Health Officers from the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms carried out any visit thereat and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when, and
- (b) if any report has been submitted in relation thereto, indicating –
 - (i) if consideration will be given for the tabling thereof, and
 - (ii) the remedial measures that have been or will be taken.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, the Commissioner of Police has informed that on 05 July 2011, the Occupational Safety and Health Officers posted at the Police Department carried out an inspection at the Rose Hill Police compound including the ex-Police Quarters situated in the compound.

In regard to part (b) of the question, a report was submitted by the Occupational Safety and Health Officers on 19 August 2011. The report which contains recommendations for the improvement of the level of safety and health, and the working environment in the compound, was forwarded to the Divisional Commander (Western Division) on 07 September 2011 for implementation.

As for part (b) (i) of the question, the Commissioner of Police has indicated that since the report contains issues pertaining to security, it would not be appropriate to table the document.

In regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, measures recommended in the report are being implemented and is being closely monitored by the Divisional Commander (Western Division).

LINE BARRACKS – CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM – CONTROL ROOM

(No. A/36) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for

Rodrigues whether, in regard to the air conditioning system found in the Control Room of the Closed Circuit Television Surveillance System for the Flic en Flac region, at the Police Information and Operations Room at the Line Barracks, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if it has broken down and, if so, indicate –

- (a) since when, and
- (b) if remedial measures will be taken.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that since 24 April 2009, the Flic en Flac CCTV Control Room has been fitted with two air conditioners, each of 25,000 BTU capacity, to maintain a constant temperature therein.

Since December last, both air conditioners have not been functioning properly. Police have taken necessary action for their repairs, but they have not been fully operational since then.

In January 2012, major problems were encountered with the functioning of both air conditioners, following which the Energy Services Division (ESD) was requested to carry out a survey of the Control Room. The ESD then advised that both air conditioners had to be replaced.

The Police have launched a tender for the acquisition of two new air conditioners and the closing date for submission of bids is 16 May 2012.

POLICE FORCE – ANNUAL REPORT 2010

(No. A/37) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the Annual Report 2010 thereof under the permanent strategic planning pillar of the National Policing Strategic Framework has been published and, if so, when and, if not, why not, indicating when same will be published.

Reply: Under the Permanent Strategic Planning Capability pillar of the National Policing Strategic Framework, the Police pledged to publish an Annual Report setting out its achievements over the past year against the set targets.

The Annual Report for the year 2010 was published on 17 June 2011. The document was launched on the same day in the presence of members of the media. Copies of the Annual Report have been distributed to the major stakeholders.

POLICE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE – UPGRADING

(No. A/38) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Police Exchange, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if delays occur in the answering of telephone calls, especially during office hours and, if so, indicate –

- (a) if urgent remedial steps will be taken, indicating if consideration will be given for an upgrading thereof, and
- (b) the number of Police Officers posted thereat, indicating the number thereof working on both first and second shifts.

Reply: The Police Telephone Exchange System presently in use is a PABX digital system which is operational since March 2000. It has a capacity to filter 60 incoming calls at a time and accommodate as much as 12,000 calls over a period of 24 hours. An average of 7,000 to 8,000 phone calls is received daily, out of which 75% is during daytime/office hours. The majority of the calls is answered within seconds and priority is given to those of an urgent nature.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the Commissioner of Police has informed that the present PABX has proved its usefulness and so far, no complaint about delays in answering phone calls at Police Telephone Exchange has been received. As of now, it is not envisaged to upgrade the system.

In regard to part (b) of the question, there are 15 police officers posted at the Police Telephone Exchange which is under the supervision of the Officer-in-Charge, Police Information and Operations Room (PIOR).

The Police Telephone Exchange operates on a 24 hr basis and there are four scheduled shift duties. On the first and second shifts, there are three Police Officers on duty respectively.

POLICE FORCE – STANDING ORDERS & INSTRUCTIONS BOOK

(No. A/39) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Standing Orders and Instructions Book of the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the frequency at which they are updated, indicating when they were last updated, and
- (b) if all Police Stations and/or branches are provided with a copy thereof and, if not, why not, indicating if remedial actions will be taken.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that the Police Standing Orders contain instructions of a permanent nature and also, basic rules and instructions governing the administration of the Police. As for the Police Instruction Book, it contains instructions that were transferred from the Standing Orders.

In regard to part (a) of the question, there is no specific frequency at which the Standing Orders should be reviewed and updated. Amendments are brought to the Standing Orders from time to time by way of Circulars and Orders issued by the Commissioner of Police; and the relevant Standing Orders are updated accordingly. All such updates are circulated to all Divisions, Branches, Stations and Units.

A revised and updated edition of the Police Standing Orders was published in April 1996, and an updated edition of the Instruction Book in July 1995.

The Police have since 2009 set up a Standing Orders Committee under the chair of a Deputy Commissioner of Police to review the Standing Orders. So far, 70% of the review has been carried out and the exercise is expected to be completed by August this year.

With regard to the Instruction Book, a team under the chair of another Deputy Commissioner of Police is reviewing and updating same. So far, 90% of the works has been completed and the book is expected to be ready for printing by next month.

In regard to part (b) of the question, copies of the updated Standing Orders and Instruction Book were distributed to all Divisions, Branches, Stations, Units as well as individually, to all members of the Force for their information and compliance therewith.

POUDRE D'OR POLICE STATION – CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/40) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Poudre d’Or Police Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if it is found in a derelict state and that it lacks space and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given for the putting up of a new and modern Police Station in replacement thereof.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that the Poudre d’Or Police Station is not in a derelict state.

Renovation works have been carried out over the building as and when required, including repairs to the roof in 2005. The building provides a safe and healthy working environment for the Police personnel and the space available is adequate to meet policing requirements.

It is, therefore, not envisaged to construct a new Police station at Poudre d’Or for the time being.

PITON POLICE STATION – NORTHERN DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS

(No. A/41) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Northern Divisional Headquarters, located at the Piton Police Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if it is in a bad state and that it lacks space, indicating the age of the building

and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given for the putting up of a new and modern building therefor.

Reply: The building housing the Northern Divisional Headquarters at Piton is a one storey building which was constructed in year 1958 and has a total floor area of 245 square metres.

Several repairs and renovation works have been carried out to the building, including a major renovation in 2006 with a view to providing a safe, conducive and healthy working environment. The building is in a good state and offers convenient working conditions.

In view of the expansion of the activities of the Police, seven of the Police Quarters located in the vicinity of the Divisional Headquarters as well as the Divisional Headquarters garage have been converted into office space to meet the working requirements.

It is not proposed to construct a new Divisional Headquarters at Piton for the time being.

However, it is within the long term planning of Police for all Divisional Headquarters to be upgraded with centrally located offices in one building, like the newly constructed ones at Flacq and Curepipe.

AUTOCYCLES & MOTORCYCLES – MODIFIED SILENCERS

(No. A/42) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the autocycles and/or motorcycles equipped with modified silencers and emitting loud noises, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the sound level meters are operational and, if so, indicate –

- (a) since when;
- (b) the number thereof available division-wise;
- (c) who are entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out the checks, and
- (d) the number of checks carried out since their coming into operation to-date, indicating the number of –
 - (i) contraventions booked;

- (ii) fixed penalty notices issued, and
- (iii) prohibition orders issued, division-wise.

Reply: Emissions of loud noises by vehicles are regulated under Regulation 83(3) of the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010.

Furthermore, the Road Traffic (Control of Vehicle Emissions) Regulations 2002 provide the maximum permissible level of noise emissions by vehicles.

On 24 October 2011, ten sound level meters were acquired by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and handed over to the Police on 14 November 2011 for enforcement purposes.

The ten sound level meters were distributed to the following units as follows –

- three to the Traffic Branch;
- two to the “*Police de L’Environnement*”;
- two to the ERS;
- two to the National Transport Authority, and
- one to Divisional Commander Rodrigues Division.

The equipment being portable were meant to be used island-wide by the different units to which they were issued.

Due to a technical problem, the sound level meters could not be used so far. Hence, no contravention has been established using the sound level meter.

In order to address the problem encountered with the sound level meters, a committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development involving all stakeholders have been set up. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, NDU, Land Transport and Shipping is seeking information from local suppliers on the maximum Revolutions per Minute (RPM) for motorised two wheelers with a view to enabling the use of external tachometer of the sound level meter.

Pending a solution to the technical problem of the sound level meters and amendment of the regulations under the Road Traffic Act, the Police Department and *Police de l’Environnement* are pursuing with roadside enforcement operations as a means of sensitisation and a deterrent to the problem of excessive noise emissions from motorised two wheelers.

For the period January 2010 to 10 May 2012, 83,638 checks and 2,432 contraventions have been established against auto/motorcycles with modified silencers and emitting loud noise, for which 221 fixed penalty notices have been issued.

However, no prohibition notice has been served on any driver due to the fact that a noise emission test has to be carried out to determine the maximum permissible noise level, prior to the issue of such a notice.

In addition to the routine checks carried out on motor vehicles, checks on autocycles and motorcycles are also conducted on the basis of complaints and information obtained from the community through Community Policing Fora. Coordinated operations are launched on a regular basis island-wide to track down those riders of autocycles and motorcycles with modified silencers and emitting loud noises.

PORT POLICE HEADQUARTERS – CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/43) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the building in which the Port Police Headquarters is housed, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if it is found in a derelict state and that it lacks space and, if so, indicate the remedial steps that will be taken, including if consideration will be given for the putting up of a new and modern building therefor.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that the Port Police Headquarters is housed in a concrete building which is of an extent of 1180² ft. The building is regularly maintained by the Mauritius Ports Authority which is the owner and the last renovation works were carried out in 2009.

The building is not in a derelict state and office space is adequate for the Police Officers posted there.

There is no project to put up a new building there.

MAURICE ILE DURABLE FUND – RESIDENTIAL GARBAGE

(No. A/44) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Maurice Ile Durable Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if any research has been carried out to assess the percentage of residential garbage that is recycled as compost, glass and plastic, and if so, give details thereof.

Reply: The Maurice Ile Durable Fund has not carried out any research in respect of residential garbage as Solide Waste Management is under the purview of the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands.

SOLAR WATER TANK SCHEME – BENEFICIARIES

(No. A/45) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Solar Water Tank Scheme, he will state the measures taken to inform the public of the eligibility criteria and conditions attached to benefit from the grant thereunder and give, as at to-date, a list of the beneficiaries thereof, indicating their respective addresses.

Reply: The Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd. in collaboration with the Maurice Ile Durable Fund is currently implementing Phase II of the Solar Water Heater Grant Scheme, and the Bank is, in the first instance, processing the backlog of 20,000 eligible applications for grants received since 2009.

Once these applications are processed, DBM Ltd. will invite new applications through a Press Communiqué giving details on the criteria as well as the terms and conditions for the new applicants to benefit from the grant under the Solar Water Heater Scheme.

As regards the list of beneficiaries and their addresses, the Bank has informed that it is against its practices to disclose such information to third parties.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS - PERISHABLE GOODS - SEIZURE

(No. A/46) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the perishable goods seized by the Municipal Council of Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the description and quantity thereof seized, on

a yearly basis, since 2005 to date, indicating if same have been distributed and, if so, to whom and in what quantity.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member and provided by the City Council of Port Louis is being placed in the library of the National Assembly.

WARD IV, PORT LOUIS - SEWERAGE SYSTEM

(No. A/47) **Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to if it has received representations from the inhabitants of the region commonly known as Ward IV, in Port Louis, for the connection of their houses to the sewerage system and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given thereto.

Reply(The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities): I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that applications for house connections are regularly received and dealt with under house connection contracts. To date, 17 applications for house connections in the region of Ward IV, Port Louis are pending and will be attended to under the forthcoming house connection contract which is presently at award stage.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD & STATE TRADING CORPORATION - HEDGING LOSSES

(No. A/48) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to hedging losses, he will state the total amount thereof incurred by the country in respect of Air Mauritius Ltd and of the State Trading Corporation, indicating if any Government guarantee was given with regard thereto and, if so, indicate in each case (a) when (b) the amount thereof in money terms and (c) the conditions thereof.

Reply: With regard to the State Trading Corporation, the total amount paid to counterparties, namely Mitsui & Co and Morgan Stanley, during the period August 2008 to

June 2009 amounted to Rs4,739,168,271.14. No Government guarantee as collateral security was given in favour of the counterparties.

As far as Air Mauritius Ltd is concerned, the losses as a result of its hedging contracts (for the period 2008 to 2011) amounted to €144,095,650. Government provided a number of guarantees in an aggregate amount of around Rs 8.2 billion to Air Mauritius to enable it to secure banking facilities and financial accommodation from financial institutions. As of date, all the guarantees have expired. Government did not incur any costs in respect of the guarantees provided. However, Government received a guarantee fee of Rs10.2 m. from Air Mauritius on those guarantees provided.

Regarding part (c) of the question, the condition was that Government irrevocably and unconditionally guarantee, jointly and in solido with Air Mauritius, the payment of the loan together with interest, costs, charges and accessories accrued thereon, until the full and complete settlement of the facilities.

VANDERMEERSCH STREET, ROSE HILL - TRAFFIC CONGESTION

(No. A/49) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Rose Hill, particularly at the roundabout on the Vandermeersch Street, at the level of the office of the Central Electricity Board, he will state if a study has been commissioned on the traffic congestion occurring thereat during peak hours, under the Road Decongestion Programme, and if so, give details thereof and if not, why not.

Reply: The study conducted by SPP Projects Solutions (Pty) Limited, transaction advisor for the Road Decongestion Programme, identified the need to construct a major bridge to link Belle Etoile to Montebello. Traffic simulations carried out by the transaction advisor showed that, with the implementation of this project, called the A1-M1 bridge, the region of Lower Plaine Wilhems, including Rose Hill, Beau Bassin and Coromandel will have faster route to motorway M1 and the Ring Road. The project constitutes an important component of the PPP Road Decongestion Programme, which is expected to start in 2013. The bid evaluation exercise for the selection of the Service Provider for the PPP Road Decongestion Programme is underway at the Central Procurement Board.

Moreover, the Road Development Authority is proposing to extend, within this financial year, the third lane from Vandermeersch roundabout towards Beau Bassin further down beyond the junction with Malartic Street. The project will be implemented this year.

As a short-term measure, the Traffic Management and Roads Safety Unit will re-programme the traffic lights at the junction of Vandermeersch/Malartic Streets with different phases and render them adaptable to traffic conditions during different periods of the day, especially the afternoon peak period.

The implementation of the abovementioned projects is expected to address the traffic congestion problem at the roundabout on Vandermeersch Street, both during peak and off-peak hours

RUISSEAU TERRE ROUGE PROJECT - COST

(No. A/50) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Ruisseau Terre Rouge project, he will state if it is completed and if so, indicate -

- (a) which authority is now vested therewith;
- (b) the actual total cost thereof, indicating the cost incurred for variation works, and
- (c) the total amount paid as penalty fees.

Reply: Major works at Ruisseau Terre Rouge were completed in December 2010. Some snag tasks were completed thereafter.

The handing over of the project to the Municipal Council of Port Louis is in process.

The actual cost of the project is Rs49,624,492.95.

This includes cost incurred for variation works is Rs3,703,768.40.

Penalty fee is not applicable due to many unforeseen situations. The delay has been mainly due to -

- (i) Very bad river conditions (namely muddy and bushy river banks, and high flood flows during rainfall.
- (ii) Continuous discharge of waste water from dyeing industries in the vicinity.

TERRE ROUGE – BRIDGE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/51) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development

Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of a bridge at Terre Rouge, near the Police Station, he will state the -

- (a) name of the contractor therefor;
- (b) total contract value thereof, and
- (c) start and completion dates thereof.

Reply: The information requested in connection with the construction of bridge at Terre Rouge, are as follows -

Name of Contractor	:	Best Construct Ltd
Contract Value	:	Rs 14,066,439.48
Start Date	:	03 March 2011
Expected completion date	:	End of June 2012

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – SUBSIDIES - CRITERIA

(No. A/52) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to public transport, he will state the total amount of subsidies disbursed in 2011 -

- (a) indicating the eligibility criteria therefor;
- (b) give a list of the bus operators who have been in receipt thereof, indicating in each case, the amount thereof, and
- (c) state the measures taken to ensure efficiency and prevent wastage and fraudulent practices, if any.

Reply (The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping): A total amount of Rs138.9 m. has been disbursed to bus companies and individual bus operators grouped into bus cooperative societies during the year 2011 as subsidy on price of diesel.

As regards part (a), payment of subsidy on diesel is meant to compensate bus operators for the difference between the market price and the base price of Rs35.00 per litre for bus companies and Rs40.00 per litre for individual bus operators, which was determined in December 2010, when the increase in bus tariff was worked out.

The prevailing price of diesel per litre is Rs41.20. Bus companies are thus compensated Rs 6.20 per litre of diesel consumed whereas the individual bus operators are compensated Rs1.20 per litre of diesel consumed. The difference in subsidy per litre is based on the cost of operation of buses operated by individual operators and those by bus companies.

As regards part (b), a list of the bus operators who have been in receipt of subsidy is being placed in the Library.

As regards part (c), bus operators are by law required to submit monthly returns giving details of traffic operations. The important element necessary for the calculation of subsidy on diesel is the number of kilometers operated by each operator. These are converted into amount of diesel consumed using established formula e.g. 34 litres of diesel/100 km operated. This formula ensures that operators maintain a minimum level of efficiency. It also provides them guidance for the type of engine efficiency for future purchases.

As for the individual bus operators, they have to submit individual returns as compared to bus companies, in addition to a route by route analysis of the number of trips and kilometers run per month by each bus.

Bus operators providing reduced bus services are penalised by a reduction in their amount of subsidy.

YOUTH & EDUCATED UNEMPLOYED - PLACEMENT SCHEMES -

(No. A/53) **Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the placement schemes for the training of the youth and of the educated unemployed, he will give a list thereof implemented, since 2005 to-date, indicating in each case the -

- (a) date of commencement thereof;
- (b) selection criteria therefor;
- (c) amount of stipend paid to each trainee;
- (d) duration thereof;
- (e) number of trainees who have successfully completed the training, indicating the number thereof who subsequently obtained employment;

- (f) total cost to Government therefor, on a yearly basis, and
 (g) if an evaluation has been carried out on the effectiveness thereof.

Reply: With regard to the placement schemes for the training of the youth and the educated unemployed, the information is provided below.

(a) Date of Commencement

NEF took over the placement and training scheme from HRDC with effect from April 2009. The list of trainees as from that date including date of commencement of their training, duration of training and amount of stipend paid to each trainee is being compiled.

(b) Selection Criteria

The selection of candidates by the employers is made from the EPIP System online along the following criteria -

Selection Criteria	
Parameters before 20 August 2011	Parameters after from 20 August 2011
Applicants recruited must be unemployed (16yrs and above) and registered free of charge with the NEF	Applicants recruited must be unemployed (16 yrs and above) and registered free of charge with the NEF
Applicants must not previously benefitted from the Placement and Training Scheme	Applicants must not have previously benefitted from the Placement and Training Scheme
Applicants must be available full-time for both formal training and for on-the-job placement.	Applicants must be available full-time for both formal training and for on-the-job placement.
Applicants undertake to complete both the training and placement for the period specified by the employer.	Applicants undertake to complete both the training and placement for the period specified by the employer.
Applicants will be entitled to a certificate recognized by MQA and may be offered an employment by the employer	Applicants will be entitled to a certificate recognized by MQA and may be offered an employment by the employer
Applicant's profile is registered on a database to which employers have access.	Applicant's profile is registered on a database to which employers have access.
Employer contacts the potential trainee/s for an	Employer contacts the potential trainee/s for an

<p>interview.</p> <p>Placement period is for a minimum of 3 months and to a maximum period of 12 months</p> <p>Employer will retain at least 75% of the trainees after their placement and training.</p>	<p>interview.</p> <p>Placement period is for a maximum period of 6 months, except for tele agents, marketing agents, BPO in the ICT sector is 3 months.</p> <p>Employer will retain at least 60% of the trainees after their placement and training.</p>
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(c) Stipend payable to trainees under the scheme is as follows -

Stipend payable to trainees (50% by employer and 50% by NEF)						
	Parameters after 20 August 2011			Parameters after 20 August 2011		
Category	Minimum monthly stipend payable to trainee (Rs.)	Contribution by employer	Contribution by NEF	Minimum monthly stipend payable to trainee (Rs.)	Contribution by employer	Contribution by NEF
Below HSC (others)	4 000	2 000	2 000	6 000	3 000	3 000
Below HSC (for trades)	5 000	2 500	2 500	8 000	4 000	4 000
Retrenched and unemployed women above 40	4 000	1 000	3 000	-	-	-
HSC	7 000	3 500	3 500	8 000	4 000	4 000
Diploma	8 000	4 000	4 000	10 000	5 000	5 000
Degree	10 000	5 000	5 000	12 000	6 000	6 000
Tele agents, marketing agents,	-	-	-	6 000	3 000	3 000

BPO						
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The contribution of NEF for the training costs is 60% and 40% for the employer of the approved rate up to a ceiling as follows -

Contribution of NEF to training costs					
Parameters before 20 August 2011			Parameters after 20 August 2011		
Category	Maximum reimbursement (Rs)	Total	Category	Maximum reimbursement (Rs)	Total
Retrenched and unemployed women above 40	13,500		Retrenched and unemployed women above 40	-	
Below HSC holders	13,500		Below HSC holders	10 000	
HSC Holders	16,500		HSC Holders	10 000	
Diploma holders	18,000		Diploma holders	10 000	
Graduates	30,000		Graduates	10 000	
			Tele agents, marketing agents, BPO	8 000	

(d) Duration of Placement

Before 20 August 2011, the placement period was for a minimum of 3 months and up to a maximum of 12 months.

As from 20 August 2011, the placement period is for a maximum of 6 months, except for tele agents, marketing agents and people of the BPO ICT sector for whom the duration is 3 months.

Table below shows the number of trainees placed and trained as from April 2009 to Dec 2011.

Sn.	Sectors	April 2009 - Dec 2009	Jan 2010 - Dec 2010	Jan 2011 - Dec 2011
1	Agriculture	29	74	38
2	ICT/BPO	2883	343	1127
3	Hotels + entertainment	378	322	349
4	Construction	201	95	111

5	Textile	117	257	368
6	Child Care-Givers	0	53	234
7	Other Services (security, cleaning, , etc)	54	472	1523
8	Admin & Consultancy	47	56	84
9	Sales and Marketing	104	147	166
	Total	3813	1819	4000
10	Number of trainee who have completed training and placement	3546	1782	987 (810 trainees is still in placement as at March 2012)
11.	Number of trainees who have secured employment	2974	1487	3013

(f) Total cost to Government

The NEF has since April 2009 to date disbursed Rs. 139,173,001. Details are as follows -

Year	Total amount disbursed (Rs)
April to December 2009	30,127,570
January to December 2010	40,000,000
January to December 2011	68,000,000
January 2012 to March 2012	1,045,430.72
Total	139,173,001

(g) Evaluation of the Placement and Training Programme

NEF has informed that the evaluation of the effectiveness of this scheme is carried out on a regular basis.

BEAU BASSIN - BIJOUX GARDEN - BENCHES AND LIGHTING POINTS

(No. A/54) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Bijoux Garden at Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau

Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to if it is in a bad state and that the lighting points found thereat are damaged and, if so, indicate if remedial steps will be taken, including consideration for the installation of additional benches and lighting points, cleaning and planting of flowers and grass.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill that the Bijoux Garden at Beau Bassin is not in a bad state and that regular cleaning is being effected by a private contractor.

Moreover, the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill is rehabilitating the Bijoux Garden. Pedestrian alley has already been resurfaced. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (NDU Division) is also providing an amount of Rs500,000 to the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill for laying of bricks, fixing of lighting points, installation of additional benches and planting of flowers and decorative plants.

CITÉ LOYSEAU - FOOTBALL STADIUM - UPGRADING

(No. A/55) **Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the upgrading and the provision of lighting at the football stadium at Cité Loyseau, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: Financial clearance has already been issued to the Municipal Council of Curepipe for fencing works of the football ground at Cité Loyseau.

The initial contract for the provision of lighting at the football ground at Cité Loyseau was awarded on 13 September 2010 to Eight Oceans Ltd but the contract was cancelled as the latter did not comply with the contractual requirements. Subsequently, the contract was awarded to Como Construction Ltd on 14 February 2011, but had to be cancelled due to non-compliance to technical specifications.

Lighting thereat will now be considered as a separate project after completion of the fencing works.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF QUATRE BORNES – VEHICLES – DAMAGES

(No. A/56) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the vehicles belonging to the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes which were damaged whilst being on the premises thereof and under security supervision at night, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from

the Council, information as to the extent of the damages in money terms, indicating the measures if any, taken against the Security Company entrusted with the responsibility for providing security services thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that the extent of damages in money terms is as follows –

Lorry Registration No.	Extent of damages in money terms (Rs)
4Z91	180,463.75
4Z109	69,249.55

The Council's Insurance Company, Sicom General Insurance Ltd has already effected the repairs to lorries 4Z91 and 4Z109 and the excess to the tune of Rs12,000 per lorry will be recouped from any payment due to Special Security Guards Ltd.

As regards measures taken against the Security Company, I am informed that –

- (i) the contract which the Council had with Special Security Guards Ltd for the provision of security services for the year 2012 was rescinded on 07 March 2012, and
- (ii) payments due to Special Security Guards Ltd for period 16 January 2012 to 07 March 2012 have been withheld until the matter is settled.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF QUATRE BORNES – LIBRARIES - NEWSPAPERS

(No. A/57) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the municipal libraries, reading points and social halls, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to its policy concerning the availability of newspapers thereat, indicating if it has received representations from the public in relation thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that following a decision taken by the Council on 15 September 2011, the policy for the provision of newspapers in Municipal Libraries, Reading Points and Social Halls has been revised for the year 2012 and only *L'Express* and *Le Mauricien* are being provided.

However, 18 local newspapers are being provided at the Simon de Beauvoir Library.

Only one letter of representation was received on 12 January 2012 from the public attending Prof. B. Bissoondoyal Complex for the provision of the following additional newspapers –

- (i) *Le Matinal*;
- (ii) *Le Defi Plus*;
- (iii) *Le Socialiste*;
- (iv) *Star*;
- (v) *Mauritius Times*;
- (vi) *5 Plus*, and
- (vii) other business and educational magazines.

MICHELLE LELIO STREET, CITE ROCHE BOIS - DRAINS

(No. A/58) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the drains at the Michelle Lelio Street, in Cité Roche Bois, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if it is filled with waste thereby causing foul smells and, if so, indicate if urgent remedial measures will be taken.

Reply: I am informed by the City Council of Port Louis that –

- (i) following an inspection carried out on 10 May 2012, it was noted that the drain at Michelle Lelio Street in Cité Roche Bois was not filled with wastes;
- (ii) foul smell was occasionally caused by illegal dumping of urine and faecal matter thereon by unknown residents, and
- (iii) whenever such a situation occurs, urgent remedial action is taken by the Council for the removal of the wastes.

MILITARY ROAD, PORT LOUIS - HOUSING PROJECT

(No. A/59) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the housing project at Military Road, Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Limited, information as to –

- (a) if the construction permits therefor have been issued and, if so, in each case
 - (i) indicate when, and

- (ii) give details thereof
- (b) the number of housing units that will be constructed;
- (c) the name of the initial contractor therefor, indicating -
 - (i) the total amount of money paid thereto, and
 - (ii) why he left the site, and
- (d) when construction works will start anew.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, the NHDC has informed that, following a tender exercise for the construction of 18 duplex (36 housing units) at Military Road, Port Louis, the contract for the works was awarded to Messrs. Yangtze Construction Co. Ltd.

The contract is a Design and Build one and provides for the successful bidder to apply for a Building and Land Use Permit prior to start of works.

Since the selected Contractor did not honour his obligations, no construction permit has been obtained from the local authority.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the project proposal comprises 18 Duplex (36 housing units) to be constructed at Military Road, Port Louis.

As regards part (c) of the question, the NHDC has informed that following the award of the contract, the site was handed over to Messrs Yangtze Construction Co. Ltd. As per the conditions of the contract, the Contractor failed to honour his obligations by non-submission of basic contract documents such as Performance Bond and the Contractor's All Risks Insurance Policy. Furthermore, as he could not mobilize resources on site, the contract was terminated. As such no payment was effected.

With regard to part (d) of the question, the NHDC is looking into alternative means and resources for implementing the project.

**GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS - RENOVATION AND UPGRADING
PRIMARY SCHOOL AS AT 11/MAY/2012**

S/N ZONE	COST CENTRE	SCHOOLS	ACTUAL (Rs.)
1	MOE1P01	A.Raman Abdool G.S	120,000.0 0
2	MOE1P02	Amaury G.S	375,000.0 0
3	MOE1P04	B.Khemloliva G.S	300,000.0 0
4	MOE1P07	Callebasses G.S	100,000.0 0
5	MOE1P08	Chitrakoot G.S	100,000.0 0
6	MOE1P09	Cite Vallijee G.S	200,000.0 0
7	MOE1P10	Cottage G.S	500,000.0 0
8	MOE1P11	Creve Coeur G.S	127,000.0 0
9	MOE1P15	D,Epinay G.S	300,000.0 0
10	MOE1P16	Dr E.Millien G.S	200,000.0 0
11	MOE1P22	Fond-Du-Sac G.S	500,000.0

			0
12	MOE1P25	GRNW G.S	300,000.0 0
13	MOE1P26	Guy Rozemont G.S	250,000.0 0
14	MOE1P29	Jean Lebrun G.S	500,000.0 0
15	MOE1P30	La Briquetterie G.S	350,000.0 0
16	MOE1P32	L'Amitie G.S	300,000.0 0
17	MOE1P33	M.P Kisnah G.S	500,000.0 0
18	MOE1P34	Maheswarnath G.S	500,000.0 0
19	MOE1P35	Mapou G.S	300,000.0 0
20	MOE1P42	Nicolay G.S	500,000.0 0
21	MOE1P44	Notre Dame G.S	500,000.0 0
22	MOE1P50	Pamplemousses G.S	100,000.0 0
23	MOE1P51	Petit Raffray G.S	500,000.0 0
24	MOE1P57	Poudre D'or HamletG.S	300,000.0 0
25	MOE1P58	Poudre D'or Village G.S	300,000.0 0
26	MOE1P59	Prof.Ramprakash G.S	200,000.0

			0
27	MOE1P62	R.Seeneevassen G.S	430,000.0 0
28	MOE1P63	R.Goburdhun G.S	200,000.0 0
29	MOE1P64	R.Moosun G.S	200,000.0 0
30	MOE1P65	R.Rivet G.S	150,000.0 0
31	MOE1P66	Roche terre G.S	500,000.0 0
32	MOE1P70	Sir Aneerood Jugnauth G.S	500,000.0 0
33	MOE1P71	Sir E. Laurent G.S	205,000.0 0
34	MOE1P72	Sir H. Vaghjee G.S	500,000.0 0
35	MOE1P74	Sir S.Ramgoolam G.S	500,000.0 0
36	MOE1P81	Vallee Des Pretes G.s	392,000.0 0
37	MOE1P84	Young Men's Hindu G.S	400,000.0 0
38	MOE1P67	Roches Noires G.S	500,000.0 0
39	MOE1P80	The Vale G.S	500,000.0 0
40	MOE1P21	Esperance Trebuchet G.S	300,000.0 0
41	MOE1P13	D.Hurry G.S	383,400.0

			0
42	MOE1P55	Pointe Aux Piments G.S	500,000.0 0
43	MOE1P05	Barlow G.S	60,000.00
1	MOE2P01	A.de Plevitz G. S	300,000.0 0
2	MOE2P03	Andre Glover G.S	445,000.0 0
3	MOE2P04	B.Rosunee G.. S	500,000.0 0
4	MOE2P05	Barkly G. .S	300,000.0 0
5	MOE2P06	Bon Accueil G. S	500,000.0 0
6	MOE2P07	Bnsee Verdiere G. S	450,000.0 0
7	MOE2P08	Camp Ithier G. S	500,000.0 0
8	MOE2P09	Camp Levieux G. S	300,000.0 0
9	MOE2P10	Camp Thorel G. S	300,000.0 0
10	MOE2P12	Coromandel G. S	500,000.0 0
11	MOE2P13	Ernest Florent G. S	300,000.0 0
12	MOE2P14	G.ChutturG. S	300,000.0 0
13	MOE2P15	Grand Sable G. S	300,000.0

			0
14	MOE2P16	Grand River South East G.S	500,000.0 0
15	MOE2P17	Henry Buswell G. S	300,000.0 0
16	MOE2P18	J.Nehru G. S	500,000.0 0
17	MOE2P19	Jules Koenig G. S	500,000.0 0
18	MOE2P20	Lady L.Ringadoo G. S	500,000.0 0
19	MOE2P21	Lady P. K. Boolell G. S	500,000.0 0
20	MOE2P22	L'Esperance G. S	300,000.0 0
21	MOE2P23	M.Fowdur G. S	500,000.0 0
22	MOE2P24	M.Ghurburrun G. S	300,000.0 0
23	MOE2P25	M.Rarnbarrun G. S	500,000.0 0
24	MOE2P26	Mare La Chaux G. S	300,000.0 0
25	MOE2P27	Melrose G. S	300,000.0 0
26	MOE2P28	Mohunlall Mohit G. S	500,000.0 0
27	MOE2P29	Moka G. S	300,000.0 0

28	MOE2P30	Mount Ory G. S	300,000.0 0
29	MOE2P31	N.Decouverte G. S	300,000.0 0
30	MOE2P32	O.Peerun G. S	500,000.0 0
31	MOE2P33	Petit Verger G. S	500,000.0 0
32	MOE2P34	Poste de Flacq G. S	305,000.0 0
33	MOE2P35	Quatre Cocos G. S	500,000.0 0
34	MOE2P36	Quatre Soeurs G. S	300,000.0 0
35	MOE2P37	R.Balgobin G. S	485,000.0 0
36	MOE2P38	R.Bundhun G. S	300,000.0 0
37	MOE2P39	R.C.Nuckchady G. S	300,000.0 0
38	MOE2P40	R.Edward Walter G. S	500,000.0 0
39	MOE2P41	R.Gujadhur G. S	500,000.0 0
40	MOE2P42	R.Hill Central G. S	500,000.0 0
41	MOE2P43	R.Motee G. S	300,000.0 0
42	MOE2P44	Ramnaram Roy G. S	500,000.0 0

43	MOE2P45	Roches Brunes G. S	500,000.0 0
44	MOE2P46	S.Bissoondoyal G. S	500,000.0 0
45	MOE2P47	S.Emile Series G. S	300,000.0 0
46	MOE2P48	S.Rajiv.Gandhi G. S	500,000.0 0
47	MOE2P49	S.Ramudhin G. S	500,000.0 0
48	MOE2P50	Sir P.Dalais G. S	500,000.0 0
49	MOE2P51	Sir S.Boolell GS	500,000.0 0
50	MOE2P52	Soopaya Soobiah GS	300,000.0 0
51	MOE2P53	Stanley G. S	500,000.0 0
52	MOE2P54	Valetta G. S	300,000.0 0
53	MOE2P55	Vele Govinden G.S	500,000.0 0
54	MOE2P56	Verdun G. S	300,000.0 0
55	MOE2P57	Vuillemin G.S	300,000.0 0
56	MOE2P75	Belle Mare G.S	300,000.0 0
1	MOE3P01	S. Torul GS	500,000.0 0

2	MOE3P02	Sivananda GS	500,000.0 0
3	MOE3P03	Bel Ombre GS	300,000.0 0
4	MOE3P04	Mon Desert MT GS	300,000.0 0
5	MOE3P05	Mare D'Albert GS	500,000.0 0
6	MOE3P07	Riv du Poste GS	300,000.0 0
7	MOE3P09	Rose-Belle South GS	500,000.0 0
8	MOE3P10	Robert Edward Hart GS	500,000.0 0
9	MOE3P11	A. Sokappadu GS	500,000.0 0
10	MOE3P12	Camp Diable GS	500,000.0 0
11	MOE3P14	R. Sewpal GS	500,000.0 0
12	MOE3P16	M. Burrenchobay GS	500,000.0 0
13	MOE3P17	Midlands GS	300,000.0 0
14	MOE3P18	Britannia GS	300,000.0 0
15	MOE3P19	G. Cheetamun GS	500,000.0 0
16	MOE3P20	P. Soobrayen GS	480,000.0 0

17	MOE3P21	Riv Des Anguilles GS	500,000.0 0
18	MOE3P23	Beau Vallon GS	500,000.0 0
19	MOE3P24	C. Telfair GS	500,000.0 0
20	MOE3P25	Riche en Eau GS	300,000.0 0
21	MOE3P26	Riv d Creoles GS	300,000.0 0
22	MOE3P27	Bois des Amourettes GS	300,000.0 0
23	MOE3P28	Duperre GS	500,000.0 0
24	MOE3P30	St Hubert GS	300,000.0 0
25	MOE3P33	Mare Tabac GS	300,000.0 0
26	MOE3P34	Basant Rai GS	300,000.0 0
27	MOE3P35	J.N. Roy GS (T. Boutiques)	500,000.0 0
28	MOE3P36	MD Saraswati GS (B.Cheri)	500,000.0 0
29	MOE3P37	Grand Bois GS	500,000.0 0
30	MOE3P38	La Flora GS	300,000.0 0
31	MOE3P39	Willoughby GS	500,000.0 0

32	MOE3P41	N France GS	500,000.0 0
33	MOE3P42	Rose Belle North GS	500,000.0 0
34	MOE3P43	Dubreuil GS	300,000.0 0
35	MOE3P44	D. Gungah GS	300,000.0 0
36	MOE3P45	Grand Bel Air GS	300,000.0 0
37	MOE3P46	Sir Claude Noel GS	500,000.0 0
38	MOE3P47	Cluny GS	300,000.0 0
39	MOE3P48	Union Park GS	300,000.0 0
40	MOE3P49	La Sourdine GS	300,000.0 0
41	MOE3P51	H Otter Barry GS	500,000.0 0
42	MOE3P52	C. Atlee GS	300,000.0 0
43	MOE3P53	Wooton GS	300,000.0 0
44	MOE3P54	J Toolsy GS	496,250.0 0
45	MOE3P55	Curepipe Rd GS	500,000.0 0
46	MOE3P56	Rev Es. Noel GS	300,000.0 0

47	MOE3P59	La Peyrouse GS	300,000.0 0
48	MOE3P60	Robinson GS	297,880.0 0
1	MOE4P01	Madho Gopaul GS	300,000.0 0
2	MOE4P04	N. Saddul GS	500,000.0 0
3	MOE4P05	Allée Brillant GS	300,000.0 0
4	MOE4P06	Pandit Sahadeo GS	500,000.0 0
5	MOE4P07	Camp Fouquereaux GS	500,000.0 0
6	MOE4P08	S. Shamboonath GS	500,000.0 0
7	MOE4P09	Mesnil GS	500,000.0 0
8	MOE4P11	H. Chooroomoney GS	500,000.0 0
9	MOE4P13	Candos GS	300,000.0 0
10	MOE4P14	Henrietta GS	300,000.0 0
11	MOE4P16	J.T. Ramsoondar GS	300,000.0 0
12	MOE4P17	Réunion Road GS	500,000.0 0
13	MOE4P18	E. Rochecouste GS	500,000.0 0

14	MOE4P19	Sookun Gaya GS	300,000.0 0
15	MOE4P20	Louis Nellan GS	500,000.0 0
16	MOE4P21	Le Morne GS	300,000.0 0
17	MOE4P22	Flic en Flac GS	300,000.0 0
18	MOE4P23	Sir V. Ringadoo GS	500,000.0 0
19	MOE4P24	P.D. de Marigny GS	500,000.0 0
20	MOE4P25	Bambous A GS	500,000.0 0
21	MOE4P28	Black River GS	300,000.0 0
22	MOE4P29	Palma GS	500,000.0 0
23	MOE4P30	Beau Sejour GS	500,000.0 0
24	MOE4P31	Baichoo Madhoo GS	500,000.0 0
25	MOE4P33	Cascavelle GS	300,000.0 0
26	MOE4P34	La Gaulette GS	300,000.0 0
27	MOE4P35	Richelieu GS	500,000.0 0
28	MOE4P36	Petite Riviere GS	500,000.0 0

29	MOE4P37	Remy Ollier 'A' GS	300,000.0 0
30	MOE4P38	Remy Ollier 'B' GS	500,000.0 0
31	MOE4P39	Phoenix GS	500,000.0 0
32	MOE4P40	New Bambous GS	500,000.0 0
33	MOE4P41	Quinze Cantons GS	300,000.0 0
34	MOE4P42	Bambous Geoffroy GS	500,000.0 0
35	MOE4P43	Albion GS	300,000.0 0
TOTAL			71,201,53 0

**SECONDARY SCHOOL AS AT
11/MAY/2012**

S/N	ZONE	COST CENTRE	SCHOOLS	ACTUAL(Rs)
1	1	MOE1S0	La Tour Koenig SSS	500,000. 00
2	2	MOE1S0	Prof. Hassen Rafa SSS	500,000. 00
3	3	MOE1S0	RCPL	500,000. 00

4	4	MOE1S0	SARM	500,000. 00
5	5	MOE1S0	Renganaden Seeneevassen SSS	450,000. 00
6	6	MOE1S0	Pailles SSS	500,000. 00
7	7	MOE1S0	Terre Rouge SSS	250,000. 00
8	8	MOE1S0	Belle Village SSS	500,000. 00
9	9	MOE1S0	Port Louis North SSS	200,000. 00
10	0	MOE1S1	Port Louis State Secondary SSS	500,000. 00
11	1	MOE1S1	GMD Achia SSS	500,000. 00
12	2	MOE1S1	D. RAMPHUL SSS	500,000. 00
13	3	MOE1S1	R. Prayag SSS	500,000. 00
14	5	MOE1S1	Lady Sushil Ramgoolam SSS	500,000. 00
15	6	MOE1S1	ADP	500,000. 00
16	8	MOE1S1	Pamplemousses SSS	500,000. 00
17	9	MOE1S1	RTI	500,000. 00
18	0	MOE1S2	Triolet SSS	500,000. 00

19	1	MOE1S2	B. Ramlallah SSS (Mapou)	500,000. 00
20	2	MOE1S2	Piton SSS	500,000. 00
21	3	MOE1S2	Riv. Du Rem. SSS(S VEERASAWMY)	500,000. 00
22	4	MOE1S2	Goodlands SSS	500,000. 00
23	4	MOE1S1	Jugdambi SSS	498,000. 00
1	1	MOE2S0	BEL AIR SSS	500,000. 00
2	2	MOE2S0	Beau Bassin SSS	500,000. 00
3	3	MOE2S0	Bon Accueil S.S.S.	500,000. 00
4	4	MOE2S0	Camp de Masque SSS	500,000. 00
5	5	MOE2S0	EBENE BOYS	500,000. 00
6	6	MOE2S0	EBENE GIRLS	500,000. 00
7	7	MOE2S0	JOHN KENNEDY COLLEGE	500,000. 00
8	8	MOE2S0	MANILALL DOCTOR SSS	500,000. 00
9	0	MOE2S1	QUARTIER MILITAIRE SSS	500,000. 00
10	1	MOE2S1	QUEEN ELIZABETH COLLEGE	500,000. 00

11	2	MOE2S1	RAJCOOMAR GUJADHUR SSS	500,000. 00
12	3	MOE2S1	SEBASTOPOL SSS	500,000. 00
13	4	MOE2S1	SMT I.GANDHI SSS	500,000. 00
14	5	MOE2S1	SIR LECKRAZ TEELock SSS	500,000. 00
15	6	MOE2S1	Mahatma Gandhi Institute	500,000. 00
16	7	MOE2S1	Mahatma Gandhi SS Flacq	500,000. 00
17	8	MOE2S1	Mahatma Gandhi SS Moka	420,000. 00
18	2	MOE2V0	Gandhian Basic School	500,000. 00
1	0	MOE3A6	MGSS N. France	500,000. 00
2	1	MOE3S0	E. Anquetil SSS	500,000. 00
3	2	MOE3S0	France Boyer SSS	500,000. 00
4	3	MOE3S0	Sangeelee SSS	500,000. 00
5	4	MOE3S0	Swami Vivenanda SSS	500,000. 00
6	5	MOE3S0	Royal College Curepipe	500,000. 00
7	6	MOE3S0	S.Bissoondoyal SSS	500,000. 00

8	8	MOE3S0	D. Lallah SSS	500,000. 00
9	9	MOE3S0	Riv des Anguilles SSS	500,000. 00
10	0	MOE3S1	Forest Side Girls	500,000. 00
11	1	MOE3S1	Forest Side Boys SSS	500,000. 00
12	2	MOE3S1	Floreal SSS	500,000. 00
13	3	MOE3S1	St Aubin SSS	500,000. 00
1	S1	MOE4M	MGSS Solferino	500,000. 00
2	1	MOE4S0	Sir A.R. Osman S.C	500,000. 00
3	2	MOE4S0	Belle Rose SSS	500,000. 00
4	3	MOE4S0	Bambous SSS	500,000. 00
5	4	MOE4S0	Vacoas SSS (Boys)	500,000. 00
6	5	MOE4S0	Phoenix SSS	500,000. 00
7	6	MOE4S0	Dr R. Chaperon SSS	500,000. 00
8	7	MOE4S0	Sodnac SSS	500,000. 00
9	8	MOE4S0	Quatre Bornes SSS	500,000. 00

10	9	MOE4S0	Gaetan Raynal S.C	500,000. 00
11	0	MOE4S1	Palma SSS	500,000. 00
12	1	MOE4S1	S. Sivananda SSS	500,000. 00
13	2	MOE4S1	La Gaulette SSS	500,000. 00
14	3	MOE4S1	Dr Maurice Curé S.C	500,000. 00
15	4	MOE4S1	Vacoas SSS (Girls)	500,000. 00
				33,818,000